

THE DEADWOOD



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Vol. V.

SPOTTER FRITEZ



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Vol. V.



FRITZ DOUBLED UP HIS FIST SO-THREATENINGLY THAT THE DARKY IMMEDIATELY GOT OUT OF HIS WAY.

Spotter Fritz;

OR,

The Store-Detective's Decoy.

BY EDWARD L. WHEELER,
AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK" NOVELS,
"ROSEBUD ROB" NOVELS, ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I

THE BOUND BOY AFLOAT.

"FRITZ!"

No answer to the call, which was shrill and authoritative; and a frown of displeasure mantled the brow of Mrs. Jerusha Shrimp, as she stood in the vine-wreathed Gothic arbor of her pretty farm-house, and gazed searchingly through a well-kept fruit orchard, now just in full bloom, which surrounded the house.

"Fritz!"

This time Mrs. Shrimp called with more vehemence, and got her answer from among the branches of a cherry tree near where she was standing—the answer coming in the good-natured Teutonic tones of the looked-for Fritz.

"Vel, v'at you vant, Mrs. Shrimp?"

"I'll show you, you rascally blunderbuss. What are you doing up in that cherry-tree, sir? Come down, instanter!"

"Dot ish all right. I sthay yoost v'ere I am!" was the reply. "Off I come down you gif me der sdrap!"

"Not this time, sir, if you come down right away," Mrs. Shrimp averred, a little more graciously, full well knowing the lad's stubborn ways. "Come down, now—that's a good boy; I want to have a talk with you."

"Vid a sdick, eh?" Fritz questioned, not offering to move until he had some assurance that it was absolutely safe.

"No! no! no! Haven't I told you that if you come down at once I wouldn't strap you?" Mrs. Shrimp reiterated, impatiently.

"Vel, den I come down," was the answer, and Fritz, clambering down out of the tree, soon stood upon the ground at a respectful distance from Mrs. Shrimp, so that in case she should make a dive for him he could run.

Even Mrs. S., with her vinegarish disposition, could not refrain from smiling as she noted his warlike precaution, and the broad grin upon his stolid, good-natured features, for Fritz was rather a comical looking fellow to gaze at, at any time.

He was short in stature for a boy of eighteen, and fat and healthy looking, with a

round German face, with a Jewish hook to the nose, and sharp black eyes, while his hair was red and bushy.

No one could look at the sturdy young Dutchman without smiling, for he was the impersonation of good-nature, clumsiness and cunning.

Dressed in a pair of loose-fitting blue overalls, met by a homespun over-frock, and a round cap on his head, minus its "scoop," and being barefooted, added somewhat further to his comical appearance.

"Fritz!" Mrs. Shrimp said, surveying him with a severe expression of countenance, "what on earth were you doing up in that tree?"

"Noddinks on earth; I vas in der air," replied the boy, with a broader grin.

"Stop!" Mrs. Shrimp commanded, rebukingly. "None of your impudence. *What were you doing in that cherry tree?*"

"Suckin' birds' eggs, und brognosdercat in' der vedder, like Venner," Fritz replied, edging a few inches further away. "Dere ish goin' to pe von pig dunder storm some off dose days."

"Oh! you awful, *awful* boy! Come into the parlor, sir, straight as you can walk. I have got something serious to say to you."

"Dot means—'Fritz, old veller, you keep von eye on vatch for der strap,'" was the silent conclusion of the lad, as he meekly followed his mistress.

The Shrimp family parlor was no elegant affair, but was rather cozily furnished; boasted of some nice pictures, a piano, and last but not least, three human ornaments in the persons of the three Misses Shrimp; the elder Shrimp of masculine gender had long since passed away, peace be to his ashes.

The eldest Miss Shrimp was over thirty, not really prepossessing; and rather a counterpart of her mother, being possessed of plenty of vim and wide-awake, look-after-the-pennies business tact, and having a decidedly sour disposition.

Knowing ones said it was because she had been unsuccessful in catching a husband; but be that as it may, Miss Caroline was her mother's favorite.

Miss Arabella was twenty-five, and more fresh and matrimonially hopeful than her elder sister. It was the hight of insult, to her, to be counted an old maid, for, indeed, did she not have a lover in Philadelphia with whom she corresponded regularly, and were they not engaged? Besides, Arabella was a writer of poems of no mean order, on such novel and original subjects as Spring, Autumn—poor sighing expiring Autumn, to say nothing of Love, Kisses and the various veins of womanly feeling. Miss Lotta Shrimp was seventeen, and the harum-scarum tom-

boy of the family, much to the ruffled dignity of her elder sisters, and the worriment of her mother, for the "fellers" that Lotta couldn't "mash," with her roguish, pretty face and figure, were literally not worth "mashing."

These three Graces of the Shrimp family were seated in the parlor when Mrs. Shrimp and Fritz entered—Miss Caroline engaged in footing up the family expense book, Miss Arabella engaged at fine sewing, and Lot, as she was called, engaged in reading a yellow-covered novel, much to the disapproval of her sisters' strict ideas.

"Fritz," Mrs. Shrimp began, as she sunk into an easy-chair, and motioned him to stand up, in front of her—"Fritz, are you aware how old you are?"

Fritz scratched his bushy red head a moment, as if the question perplexed him.

"Vel, I don'd know dot," he finally replied, "but off I vas der shudge py as many licken's I haff got, I dink I vas no older as dwelve or thirdeen."

"Ha! ha! good for you, Fritz! You're nobody's fool!" cried Lotta.

"Lotta!" Mrs. Shrimp said severely, setting her foot down heavily on the floor. "You are not required to speak till you're spoken to."

"But, you know I will have my say, now, mammy," the independent member of the Shrimp family declared, with a malicious grin at Caroline.

"Fritz," Mrs. Shrimp pursued, "you are eighteen years old, to-day."

"Vas? So old ash dot?"

"Exactly, sir, according to the age given me by the man who bound you out to me."

"You mean dot old Hyman, der pack-peddler?"

"Yes. And you being eighteen, your service for me is concluded. It is just five years ago to-day, since I took you to bring up, from the peddler who said you were his brother's son, and he wanted you reared in a good Christian family where you could have the advantages of proper training and education. The laws knows you've had both, but I can see very little improvement in you."

"You could not expect to work education into a blockhead," Miss Caroline snapped.

"Dot vas drue," Fritz assented, his eyes flashing. "Cow-sdables don'd vas der blace der git some educations, und der old vimmenshe haff triad hard to train me with der sdrap, but id don'd vas in me."

The elder Shrimps frowned, ominously, while Lot clapped her hands.

"Hurrah! What a shot that was!" she cried, dramatically. "Stick to it, Fritz! I glory in your spunk. To be sure you couldn't get education milking cows, like you could if you had been sent to school."

"Humph! school, indeed! He's barely earned his clothing and living, to say nothing about going to expense of sending him to school. I should think you were old enough to talk better sense, Lot!" was Miss Caroline's sharp reproof.

"I'm sure Fritz has been treated very well, and cannot complain. I've taught him how to read, write, spell and cipher, myself," meekly added Miss Arabella.

"Oh! of course! But I say he's been made to work all the time, and used more like a slave!" Lot asserted, defiantly. "Bah! don't talk back to me, you old crones!" and with this parting shot, she returned to the perusal of her book, while Mrs. Shrimp and her two elder daughters each gave a deep, deep sigh. Incorrigible Lotta would yet bring them, in gray hairs, to the grave, they declared.

"And so, your time being up, Fritz, and we having insufficient work to keep you employed," Mrs. Shrimp went on, "we have concluded that we shall have to let you go!"

Fritz's countenance fell a little at this announcement.

"I don'd understand. You don'd vas vant me any longer, eh?" he asked, rather sorrowfully.

"No, Fritz; necessity compels us to part with you. You are getting to be a man now, and naturally eat more and wear out more clothing than when younger, and that, together with the fact that we haven't enough to keep you busy, and that times are getting harder, makes it imperative that we curtail our expenses as much as possible."

"But, v'ot ish to pecome of me? Vere I go, Mrs. Shrimp? I haff no home—I haff no blace to go—no money—no notting."

"Pshaw! brace up and face the world, and look up something to do, on your own hook! Get a pack and go to peddling!" Miss Caroline advised.

"Don't you do it, Fritz!" cried Lot.

"Jest you go on the stage—that's your best hold. You're boss in magic and tricks, an' I bet you'd make a hit!"

"Fritz, listen not for a moment to my irreverent child!" Mrs. Shrimp cried, putting up her hands in horror. "Never, never aim to go upon the stage or into those awful palaces of sin called theaters. Lotta, child, if Parson Skindle were to hear you give such an un-Christian advice, he'd read you a severe lecture on the wickedness of your ways."

"Fudge!" Lotta retorted, snapping her thumb and finger. "Don't Parson Skindle go to circuses?—and Tom Flynn told me that the parson even took in the Black Crook when he was in New York."

"Child! child! hush such nonsense. ii

Parson Skindle has ever entered a tent, recollect it was only to see the animals. He'd scorn to look at the circus, and as for his going to see the Black Crook, that's simply a fabrication on the part of that wicked Thomas Flynn."

"Of course!" agreed Caroline.

"What a sin that any one could thus malign Parson Skindle," from Arabella.

"No, no, Fritz, never let temptation lead you into a life of sinfulness," Mrs. Shrimp continued. "I have already secured you a position, if it is such as will suit you. Parson Skindle knows of a brother minister who wants a boy to chore around for him, like sweeping out his office, keeping the fires, blacking his boots, running errands, and so forth. How would you like that?"

"I don'd dink ash how I'd like dot and-so-forth job," Fritz replied, manifesting more spirit than was customary for him. "Uff you don'd vas like me, I vill go to Philadelphia und start into pizness."

"But, Philadelphia is a great city, Fritz, and a great ways from here."

"Dot is drue, but I haff got legs, und I soon get there. Maybe I find work on der road, und den I can go on der cars. I vas much obliged to you all vor keepin' me so long, und off I ever get rich I vill send you somedings to remember me by."

Fritz left the Shrimp homestead that very afternoon. He was only too glad to be given his freedom, for his life had been none too easy there, and he was ambitious to make something for and of himself.

He had no clothing to carry, but in a little carpet-sack he had some apparatus which appertained to certain little tricks in parlor magic, in which by natural gift he was an adept.

Caroline had also hunted him up a serviceable pair of shoes, so that he need not start out barefooted.

Lotta, who had always been his firm friend, and had taken sides with him, was the only one to follow him to the gate.

"Fritz," she said, "I hate to see you go, but am well satisfied you will find it easier elsewhere than here. But I am determined you shall not go on foot. Here is my pocketbook, containing the money I have earned. Take it as a gift from me, and purchase you a ticket for Philadelphia. When you get there, you will still have some money left. With it you can obtain board and lodgings until you can find employment; then, when you get to doing well, you can send it back to me, and no one will be the wiser for it."

"But, Miss Lotta, you vas not afraid to

drust me? Maybe I get sick und kick ofer der bucket—v'ot den?"

"Pshaw! don't have such a thought. I anticipate a bright future for you, and know you'll be honest enough to send it back."

"Und you bet I vill, off I nefer do vone odder t'ing in der world. Good py, Miss Lotta! You vas alvays kind mit Fritz, und he'll nefer forget you."

And with tears in his eyes, the big hearted German lad raised to his lips the lily hand that had felt for him in giving him the money; then turned and strode down the winding country road—the avenue that took him hence into a strange, active and exciting life.

CHAPTER II.

FRITZ IN FUN.

Of his parentage Fritz had no knowledge. His first recollection was of being under the charge of a hard-hearted, unscrupulous old Jew pack-peddler named Hyman, with whom he had traveled about the country until five years before, when Hyman had made a bargain with Mrs. Shrimp to take the crude German Jewish boy and train him up in the way all Americans go.

As before stated, Fritz's term of bondage had been anything but pleasant at the farm, and he had ideas of his own that he would like to go back to Philadelphia, which was the home of Hyman, by the way, and make an attempt to start in the world for himself.

In what way he should be able to do this, he had had no clear conception until Lotta's friendly gift of the money; but now, as he trudged along down the old turnpiked road toward the station, bright visions of prosperity loomed up before him.

He would purchase some trinkets and jewelry, if nothing more, and start out peddling, until he could get something better to do.

On his way to the station, he counted over the money Lotta had so kindly loaned him, and found that there was forty dollars and fifty cents.

"Dot ish a pile," he soliloquized, thoughtfully. "I get a ride from here to Philadelphia, and stardt into pizness, right avay off! Byme-by, ven I get rich und spruced up like ash der odder nabobs, vid a white duck suit und diamond pin—den I coome pack und see Miss Lotta. Off der old woman pe dead, den maybe I marry her—nefer, unless she is dead. Too much strap flyin' apoud der premises."

He soon reached the station.

Waverley was a pretty little town, and having been there often on errands, Fritz soon found the depot.

It was a common wooden structure, such

as serve the purpose of passenger-stations along many of our railroads, with but one waiting room, for both ladies and gentlemen.

The train had not yet arrived which was to take Fritz to Philadelphia, but he made haste to enter the waiting room and purchase his ticket.

The room was comfortably filled with people who were waiting for the train, and the keen eye of Fritz ran over the assemblage, while he was putting away his purse in an inner pocket, where he calculated it would not be easily reached by thieves.

Most noticeable, among others, were three parties—one, a young woman who was endeavoring to feed a fretful baby from a bottle; the others, two foppishly dressed young men, with waxed mustaches and glossy silk hats, and clothing immaculate.

Judging by their appearance, Fritz set them down as commercial drummers. He had studied the peculiarities of men of their ilk frequently, while out peddling with Moses Hyman, and at once recognized the calling of these two.

They in turn seemed to consider him an object of curiosity, for they at once began to poke fun at him.

"Hello, Dutchy—going to N. Y.?" the youngest saluted, sarcastically,

"No, he is going to Phil., to embark in the mercantile biz," the other chimed in. "Don't you see the cut of his cloth—a walking tailor, eh, Hans?"

"No tailor about him," retorted the first drummer. "He owns a jewelry shop with three balls in front, on Chestnut!"

"I'll bet we're both wrong. That mouth indicates that he's a pretzel manufacturer," declared the elder; then they both laughed heartily.

Fritz colored a little, at first, but quickly regained his composure.

"You don'd vas neider off you right," he said, quietly; "I vas engaged in der occupation of minding my own pizness."

An expression of approval ran over the faces of those assembled, showing that their sympathies were not with the drummers.

"Humph! the modern Dunderbuss ain't so slow, after all," remarked one of the drummers. "I say, my German Satan, what have you got in your grip-sack?"

"Dot's my business; I carry my stock in trade mit my sachel, but you carry yours in your hat, I see."

"Ha! ha! what an idea! Here, you sauerkraut, what can you find in that hat?" the commercial man cried, taking off his plug and handing it to Fritz.

Fritz took the hat, a merry twinkle in his little black eyes.

"Vy, der ish lots in it," he said, fumbling

about in the bottom of the hat. "In der first place, I suppose you vill give me all I find, der live stock excepted?"

"Yes, you are welcome to all you find except the hat and its lining," the drummer replied, beginning to feel a little uncomfortable, for all eyes were turned in curiosity upon him and the young Dutchman.

"Vel, den I'll haff enough to start in mit der junk bizness, v'en I get to Philadelphia," Fritz announced, with a grin. "Hello! v'ot ish dot?"

And to the astonishment of all, he drew a pair of lady's stockings from the hat, and held them up in full view of the audience.

A roar of laughter was the verdict from all save the drummer, who swore roundly.

"Let me have my hat! Who in the deuce put those stockings in it?" he cried, half-be-side himself with chagrin and rage.

"Don'd pe in so mooch hurry," Fritz returned, keeping the hat. "It is no uncommon occurrence dot a feller wants to carry a keepsake vid him, off his fraulein. Maybe ve find who der socks belongs to," and he went on fumbling the plug. "Ah! yes—here ve got der photograph off der owner of der hose!"

And from the hat, to all appearances, he took a cabinet photo of a buxom negress, and held it up to view.

The yell of laughter that followed caused the drummer to use language more irreverent than polite, as he leaped forward and succeeded in grabbing his offending hat, from the young magician.

"What infernal trickery is this?" he demanded on gazing into the head-covering and beholding nothing there. "What do you mean, you Dutch blunderhead?"

"Oh! noddinks! noddinks! I vas simply showin' you how easy der smart snob can be foolish," Fritz answered.

The locomotive whistle now sounded, and put a stop to any further fun for the awaiting passengers.

The crestfallen dandy and his companion made a hurried exit, and were the first to get aboard the cars.

Fritz, with his sack in hand, awaited for the other passengers to get aboard, and while thus detained, noticed that the woman of the squalling infant had forgotten the baby's bottle, which lay upon the seat near where she had sat.

It instantly occurred to Fritz that he could have some fun with the bottle, and he accordingly slipped it into his pocket—for, aside from being an expert magician, he was a ventriloquist of no mean order. Though nature had made him stout and clumsy, she had certainly endowed him with two valuable gifts.

Boarding the train, Fritz was lucky enough to find a seat just in front of the woman of the squalling babe.

Across the aisle from Fritz sat an elderly party whom the young traveler at once set down as a crusty old bachelor—for he wore goggles, read the New York *Tribune*, and appeared of a very nervous temperament, as he cast numerous frowns in the direction of the fretting infant.

"Dot is my game," Fritz quietly muttered. "He pe sour vinegar, yoost like old vimmens Shrimp, und I haff some fun mit him."

To do this he must wait until the lady with the baby should discover the loss of the bottle, which occurred just as the train had stopped for a twenty-minute halt at Pittston, where a few of the passengers left the car, Fritz, the lady and the bachelor retaining their seats.

"Oh! dear, what has become of baby's bottle?" queried the lady, searching about among her bundles. "I do believe I left it in the station-house at Waverley."

"That is too bad," an elderly lady said, in the next back seat. "Perhaps some one has stolen it?"

She was one of the ignorant traveling class, who regards every person as a black-leg and pickpocket.

"Who could be so hard up as to appropriate such a trifling affair?" the lady asked, in surprise.

"Oh! there's a great many up to such mean little tricks, nowadays, I tell you—it won't do to over-trust any one."

"Very true!" a pious, ministerial looking man just in front of the bachelor seemed to say. "I can tell you where your bottle is, ma'am—this man with the newspaper and goggles has it!"

"That's a thunderin' lie!" roared the bachelor, leaping to his feet.

And he shook his fist very close to the nose of the pious-looking party, who stared in astonishment.

"You're another!" was the retort, which Fritz, of course, was responsible for. "You've got the suckin'-bottle in your hat, and you can't deny it. I saw you conceal it there."

"Did you? did you?" the bachelor yelled, fairly dancing with rage. "Oh! you slanderer, I'll learn you how to mind your business," and he was about to deal the astonished party a blow in the face, when Fritz sprung forward and caught his arm.

"Stop avile," he said. "Let me look in your hat; perhaps der odder fellow is right!"

"Right? right? why you impudent lout, what do you mean? What do you suppose

would be my object in stealin' a baby's sucking-bottle and hiding it in my hat?—and I a single man, thank God, at that? This is scandalous—outrageous. Here—take my hat and look at it, and satisfy yourself!"

And he jerked off his somewhat shiny "plug," and handed it to Fritz, who thrust his hand inside of it, and—lo! and behold, drew forth the missing bottle, half-filled with milk, just as the lady had left it, at the depot.

For the moment the bachelor stood as if struck dumb with horror—then, uttering a violent curse, and seizing the hat and stamping it beneath his feet, he rushed from the cars, like a madman while Fritz restored the bottle to the surprised mother of the child, and the passengers were left in wonderment.

Fritz, quite satisfied with the mischief he had done, cuddled down in his seat for a good sleep, which, owing to fatigue, he was able to enjoy.

The afternoon had fled and evening was gathering over the fleeting landscape, when he awakened.

The brakeman had not yet been around to light the lamps, and it was quite dark in the car—so gloomy, in fact, that the passengers at the further end were almost indistinct.

Two portly individuals occupied the seat just in front of the boy, and were conversing in an undertone, yet loud enough for him to catch the drift of their conversation.

"You are sure the detectives are on the watch?" the one next to the aisle questioned.

"Yes—have been ever since the other cargo was run in. There'll be no hope of getting the Fleetwing's load into market, until a meeting is called and notes compared."

"Then it must be done. I will telegraph to Gregg, to-night, and learn how the coast is, about Atlantic City."

"That will be risky. Do nothing until there is a meeting. As soon as we reach the city, I will write each member, and call a meeting of the league, at the last meeting-place to-morrow evening at ten o'clock."

"Probably that will be the best thing to do. It will be a good opportunity, also, to appoint a new spy to watch the man that isn't above suspicion."

"Pshaw! I'd stake my life on his loyalty."

Then the brakeman came into the car, leaving the door open, and the din was so great, caused by the roar of the train, that Fritz failed to hear any more, ere the men relapsed into silence.

He went to the front of the car, however, to get a drink, and on his way back, took a

look at the two men, so that he might remember them, thereafter, if he had any occasion to.

CHAPTER III.

FRITZ AND REBECCA.

VERY few writers' powers of description are adequate to the task of expressing a person's feeling on first entering a great and bustling city, after a quiet life in the country. Only those who have been there can realize the strange sensation that passes over one, who awakens to the knowledge that he is landed in a great city among strangers, alone, unknown, and uncared for by the great eddying torrent of humanity around them.

Fritz Snyder, although ignorant in the ways of the world, was by no means 'a greeny.'

As Mrs. Partington would remark of Ike; "He had a pile of ideas o' things in general in his head, did Ike, but had ruther a poor way of showin' 'em." And so it was with Fritz.

He fully realized that he was in a big metropolis, dependent upon his own resources for a livelihood; but he had confidence that he could take care of himself and soon find employment.

"I vil put up at the best hotel, to-night," he decided, "und uff I don'd can stand der pressure, any longer, I'll find a sheaper one to-morrow, vere I can make a good deal of show for a leedle money."

By inquiry of a policeman, he learned that either the Girard or Continental were considered first-class hotels, and accordingly got into a hack and ordered the driver to take him to the latter-named hotel.

"But hold up!" the driver said. "I reck-on you don't mean the Continental, do ye, Dutchy? It costs a V a day there. Now, there's an emigrant lodging-house, down on Dock street, where ye kin get a bed for a nickel, and soup, down-stairs, fer a postage stamp. Reckon that would suit you best, eh? Right smart place it is, too."

"You take me yoost where I told you to," Fritz replied. "Uff you vas know my pizness better den I vas, I like to know dot."

"All right; to the Continental you go, then, but I'll wager you'll not get in."

"Den I vil stay oud," Fritz muttered, grimly. "Uff my money don'd vas so good ash somebody else's, den I know der reason."

The carriage soon rolled away over the pavement toward the center of the city, and from the window-pane our adventurer watched the stores and houses flit by, in great curiosity.

He had never been in the city before—at least, not since he could remember—and the great rows of massive brick and marble

structures, and the lighted, elegant stores looked strangely grand and beautiful to him.

In due time the cab halted before the Ninth-street entrance to the Continental Hotel, and Fritz got out.

"I'll wait here a bit, so if you don't get in I'll take you some'res else," the driver said, with a grin, as he received his fare.

"Don'd you worry aboud me," Fritz replied, good-naturedly. "Uff I do look a leedle green, dot don'd vas signify any-dings."

"It signifies ther'll be some fun in the Continental," the driver mused, turning away.

Into the hotel, and direct to the office, Fritz strode, grip-sack in hand, resolved to put on a bold front, and face the music as any person does who applies to an austere hotel clerk for accommodations.

"Can I get accommodations here for one day?" he asked of the clerk.

The clerk eyed him a moment superciliously; then glanced at the room record, which lay on the counter.

"Cannot keep you; house is full," he replied, curtly. "Plenty of other hotels handy."

"But I don'd vas want some oder hotels," Fritz returned, decidedly. "I want to stay heer, so yoost give me a room. I can pay for 'im."

Seeing that he had undertaken to bluff the wrong man, the clerk assigned him a room, to which he was shown.

Fritz spent a very pleasant evening, looking around and had a good night's rest.

He awoke at a seasonable hour, the following morning, and dressing himself, went down-stairs to the breakfast room.

A darky waiter, sprucely dressed, and wearing a white apron, met him as he was about entering.

"Say, jes' youh hold on!" he saluted; "de boss gave order dat youh was not to eat wid de odder guests. "You's got to wait for de servants' table."

"Ish dot so?" Fritz said, surveying the darky, critically. "Vel, den better you tell dot boss I eat yoost v'en I please, so long as I pay vor id. You gid oud off de-way, or I plack your swi' eyes mit blue."

And he doubled up his formidable pair of fists so threateningly, that the darky immediately got out of his path.

"Take care, sah! Don't strike me or I'll hab you arrested. Don't youh gone in dat breakfas' room, or I'll tell de boss."

"Dell 'im; dot ish all right," Fritz retorted. "I plack his eye, if he fool mit me."

Then he entered the great hall, which was filled with fashionables of both sexes.

As may be imagined Fritz's attire did not

create a favorable impression, as he walked independently into the room, and took his seat at the head of one of the tables, and giving his orders for what he wanted, he eat with a relish what was set before him.

He keenly felt the evident displeasure of the others to his presence, and resolved to have satisfaction.

From his position he commanded a view of nearly all the tables, which gave him a good vantage ground.

"Piel" he ventriloquially caused a stout, elderly lady to shout, and all eyes were turned upon her in astonishment, for she was a leader of fashion, and the last one to be guilty of such a breach of etiquette.

"Rotten eggs—phew!" came from another part of the room.

"Hairs in the butter!" apparently cried another lady.

These exclamations, as may well be imagined, caused an immediate sensation, and the boarders stared at each other inquiringly, some utterly shocked, while others were inclined to laugh.

And Fritz went industriously on eating, nobody suspecting him to be the author of the cries.

Several of the guests and boarders got up to leave the room.

"Look at 'em go. They're sick," a voice cried. "Dead flies in the biscuits—ba-a-ek!"

Then there was a sound as if of some one vomiting, at which another delegation beat a hasty retreat from the room.

The proprietor of the great hotel soon made his appearance, purple with rage.

"What is the matter here?" he demanded striding up and down the room. "Who is it that is finding fault with the service? Is it you, sir?"—and he caught hold of Fritz's coat collar, angrily.

"Shimminy dunder!" Fritz ejaculated, innocently—"v'ot is der matter? I don'd vas find noddings der matter mid der food."

"Then I'd just like to find out who is creating all this disturbance," the landlord stormed.

No one answered him.

What guests yet remained in the room were as much nonplussed as he.

At this juncture the imposing darky steward of the house stepped in from the main entrance door, and Fritz manufactured words for him, ere he could speak himself.

"Say, boss," he seemed to say, "dar's a basket of pie cats down-stairs; shall I put 'em in de 'vaporator?"

"Get out, you accursed nigger!" fairly howled the tormented landlord, and seizing a castor from the table he hurled it at the supposed offender "coon," and then dashed furiously in pursuit.

Fritz, concluding that he had created enough mischief, abstained from further ventriloquial efforts, and when he had finished his breakfast, procured his grip-sack, and went down to the office of the hotel.

"Vel, how much is my bill?" he asked, addressing the clerk; "supper, lodging and breakfast?"

"Nothing at all; all we want of you is to get out of the house, and stay out!" was the surly reply. "The devil's been to pay ever since you came."

"Vel, I ish very much opliged," Fritz replied, graciously, "und der next time a Dutchman comes along maybe he'll stop at der Condernental."

Then with a grin he took his departure.

The job before him now—that of finding a situation—was neither agreeable nor easy. He was well aware that his attire was not in his favor, so he resolved to seek a clothing house, and make a purchase.

Pursuing his way into Eighth street he soon came to a little store in front of which hung three golden balls.

"I dinks I get v'at I wants, in here," Fritz muttered. "Dese places generally find just what a veller wants, vedder he wants it or nix."

It was a pawnbroker's shop attended by a pretty Jewess maiden, and filled with a motley collection of goods, all the way from a jew's-harp and jewelry, to household goods and pianos—nearly everything, in fact, one's mind could conceive.

"Is der boss apoud?" asked Fritz, as he entered and gazed about.

"Yes; I'm the boss, at present, until my uncle comes back," the girl replied in perfect English. "What do you want?"

"Vel, dot is der trouble. I want a good many t'ings, but I haff but leedle moneys," Fritz replied, good-naturedly. "Off you dink you can rig me oud so I look like a reg'ler masher, vor half a dollar, I guess you can take my measure for a suit of clothes."

"I am afraid not, for that sum, but I can suit you, I know. We have quite an assortment of clothing, both new and second hand;—which would you prefer?"

"Der second hand vil do purdy goot, uff it is clean und sheep. You see, I haff yoost got ready to start into business, und I haff got to start at der foot off der ladder mit sheep clothing, und pyme-py, v'en I gits rich, I vil pe able to wear a dry goods store."

"Oh! so you are just beginning life in the city, eh?"

"Yes; I haff come to der city to make my fortune. You seem like a purdy nice gal; v'ot is your name?"

"Me? oh, I am Rebecca Hyman, and I

live with my uncle Alonzo—Alonzo Schwitzer. And, what is your name?"

"I vas Fritz Schootzenhifer Snyder, S. O.—somebody's orphan," was the reply. "Den you vas a Jewess?"

"Yes."

"Und your name vas Hyman, you dells me?"

"Yes; Rebecca Hyman. I work at the wholesale and retail establishment of Schloss and Harrington, dry-goods merchants, but uncle he took sick, yesterday, and so I got excused to-day."

"Your father—v'ot apoud him?"

"Oh, he has been dead these five years."

"Is dot so? Vel, I'll pet you a half a dollar I used to know him. He vas an old son-of-a-gun v'ot used der peddle pins und needles oud in der country, mit a pack on his back."

"Oh! no! no! that was not my father—that was my bad, bad uncle, Moses Hyman. Oh! Fritz, he is a bad, wicked man, and folks are afraid of him. My father wouldn't have anything to do with him. He is a night-hawk!"

"A night—v'ot?"

"A night-hawk—a thief—a smuggler."

"Is dot so? Vel, I yoost vant to hawk onto him, vone off dose days, on bizness—dot's all. I makes fun mit him."

CHAPTER IV.

FRITZ TRIES FOR A JOB.

THEN Fritz made an explanation of how he had formerly been in the care of a pack-peddler by the name of Hyman, who had bound him over to Mrs. Shrimp to work on the farm; and, altogether, the two had quite a little chat.

"And so you have come into the city to make your fortune, eh?" Rebecca asked. "What business do you propose to start into?"

"Vel, dot depends considerable on circumstances. Uff I could, I'd like to get a job where you are."

"Ha! ha! ha! Well, let me see. I wish you could, but am afraid you can't. I don't believe Schloss and Harrington are in need of any help; still, I could get you in with them, if any one could, and I'd like to, too, because you seem to be a pretty nice fellow, Fritz, and could come home with me nights as far as the corner, and I wouldn't be afraid—see?"

"Oh! yes; I coome home vid you four or five times effery night, if you like, v'en you get me the job."

"Oh! no—not so many times as that, Fritz; once will be quite sufficient. Now, let us look you up some clothing, and I'll send you around to Schloss and Harring-

ton's. What kind of a suit do you want, Fritz?"

Fritz proceeded to inspect the stock, and selected a very loud suit of cheap diagonals, together with a Derby hat, a pair of shoes, a tie, some handkerchiefs and a spring overcoat.

"There! dot's about what I want; now how much for the lot?" he asked.

"Twenty dollars, to you."

"Got oud! You dink I vas a foolishness, Rebecca? I giff you yoost ten and half of a dollar for der lot, or you can put dem back mit der shelf."

"Very well, Fritz. They cost ten dollars at the 'crash,' and *you* can have them at cost. Go in the back room and try them on, and when you come out I will have a letter of introduction for you, to Schloss and Harrington."

"All right, Rebecca; you pe der boss girl. I'll bet half a dollar I look yoost like a reg'lar masher mit dese clothes."

And his appearance was greatly changed for the better when he re-entered the store.

"Vel, how do I look, Rebecca?" he demanded, surveying himself in a glass. "Don'd I vas look like a ready-made Congressman?"

"Oh! yes; your appearance is greatly improved. I haven't a doubt but what the firm will take you in, and you will do well."

"Vel, I dink so. It von't pe my fault off I don't own half of der business before I'm with them *ein* year. V'ot is this, Rebecca?"—as she handed him a letter.

"That is an introductory note for you to the firm. You can give that to Mr. Harrington, the senior member, and you will find him a courteous gentleman."

"But, v'ere vill I find der old snoozer, Rebecca?"

"'Sh, Fritz! You must be very respectful in addressing business people, in order to be successful—do you see? Politeness and refinement are a stranger's best recommend. Now, you go on down Eighth to Chestnut, and anybody can direct you to Schloss and Harrington's, and when shown into his presence, tip your hat, and present this letter. He will read it, and tell you what chance there is for you."

"All right, Rebecca, and I pe der happiest son-off-a-gun living, v'en he dells me he vil take me in as a partner."

"Well, you might be; but, remember, Fritz, you will have to begin at the foot of the ladder, and work upward. Now, good-by. Go try what you can do, and let me know what success you have."

Fritz accordingly sallied forth in quest of Schloss and Harrington's. He soon found their wholesale and retail importing estab-

lishment and entered and inquired for the senior partner.

"What do you want of him? He is busy," the clerk answered, to whom he had applied—a somewhat portly individual, with a full face, dark mustache, shrewd black eyes, and a slight bald spot on his head.

"I vant to see him; id don'd vas matter to you v'ot for," Fritz replied, independently. "Off you vill haff the kindess to show me the office, I vill not trouble you."

The clerk—or foreman—frowned.

"Jack," he said, addressing an errand boy, "show this gent to Mr. Harrington's office."

The boy obeyed, and Fritz soon stood in a small but tasty business office, in the presence of the senior partner of the firm.

"A gentleman to see you, sir," the boy said, and then bowed himself out.

"You wish to see me," Mr. Harrington said, surveying his visitor, rather critically and yet courteously. "Be seated, sir. Mr. Fisk—" turning to another individual who also sat in the office—"we will speak further on the subject, as soon as I attend to this young man's wants."

Mr. Harrington was a man of some five-and-forty years of age, well-preserved, and a hearty, noble-looking specimen of manhood. He was one of those business men whose kindly face and courteous address always favorably impressed the masses with whom he had dealings; a noble, honest nature, free of conceit or deception, was delineated in feature, expression, and habitual bearing. And yet, evidently, a man who could be stern and unyielding, when emergency demanded.

There were threads of silver in his hair and mustache; his attire was plainly elegant, as befitted the station in life he held.

The other occupant of the office, aside from Mr. Harrington and Fritz, was a smooth-faced man of thirty or thereabouts, with a sharp, peculiar cast of physiognomy, keen, restless eyes, straight black hair, and the general appearance of a person whose business it was to study those with whom he came in contact. His suit of blue broad-cloth, his faded tie and old style "plug hat" were of seedy appearance from constant use.

Fritz made this inventory of the two men before he answered Mr. Harrington.

"Yes, I haff a letter for you from Miss Rebecca Hyman—you know Rebecca, eh?" he said, handing the letter to the merchant.

"Ah! yes. Rebecca is one of our cleverest clerks," and he tore open the envelope. "Yes, yes—I see. Rebecca states that you are an honest young man in search of a position where you can make yourself useful for a small compensation to begin with. Well,

that is a good point; never ask for a large salary until you can prove that you are worthy of it, my boy. I don't know that we have need of any more help at present; still, I will see about it, as Rebecca has been of remarkable value to us, and I would like to accommodate her."

"Yes, Rebecca is a reg'lar slasher, und I bet half a dollar I und Rebecca gots married some of dose deys pyme-py, v'en ve got rich."

"Ha! ha! so you aspire to riches, eh? Well, there's no harm in that, as long as you make it your aim to attain all honestly, my boy, and I dare say Rebecca would make any young man a good helpmate. What can you do, sir?"

"Vel, I don'd know so much about dot till I try. I dinks I can do a good many things as a helper."

"Oh, very likely. At what were you last employed?"

"Vel, I milked der cows und fed der pigs, und hunted der goose eggs for Mrs. Shrimp, for several years past, und when I haff no chores to do, I practice some tricks in magic und vendrilogism—see? Pefore dot, I used to travel mit der coundry vid old Hyman und sell pins, needles, shoe-sdrings, susbenders, und dose t'ings."

"Ah! I see; you have been in the mercantile business, then," Mr. Harrington said, a faint smile playing about his mouth. "Now, one important thing, Fritz—are you strictly honest?"

"Mr. Harrington, I was one off der honestest poys in der vorld. I vouldn't steal even a hair v'ot somebody had dropped mit der butter."

So sincere did the young Teuton seem in his declaration that both the merchant and his friend laughed heartily.

"Well, I must say that is a novel assurance," the former said, good-humoredly.

"Assurance? V'ot is dot?" Fritz asked, not understanding the word.

"I should have said that was a novel expression to illustrate one's honesty," Mr. Harrington replied. "I will see, my boy, what show there is for you," and he touched a bell-knob which communicated with the store.

A small boy immediately answered the summons.

"Tell Mr. Daniels to step here a moment," the merchant ordered.

The foreman whom Fritz had first encountered soon made his appearance, and stood respectfully in waiting.

"Mr. Daniels," the merchant said, "this young man comes to me in search of a job. He is well recommended, and if there is a vacancy in any of our business departments

that he can fill, I would like to give him a trial."

"There is no vacancy that I know of at present, sir," Daniels replied.

"Very well; you may go," and the foreman accordingly took his departure.

The merchant then turned to Fritz.

"Well, my boy, you heard what my foreman, Mr. Daniels, had to say? I am afraid there's no chance for you just now."

"Dot feller is a sucker v'ot eats all der bait off der hook!" Fritz declared, nodding his head.

"What? Why, Mr. Daniels is a thorough gentleman, and one of our most efficient employees. You have made a singularly wrong estimate of our foreman!" the merchant said, a trifle severely.

"The boy is hardly to blame," the man Fisk remarked. "Daniels has rather a hang-dog look about the eyes. By the way, friend Harrington, I suppose a little advice wouldn't be offensive to you, eh?"

"From you, certainly not, Mr. Fisk. Fire away—volumes of it, if you like."

"Well, what I wanted to advise was that you retain the services of our son of Israel, here; don't tax him with work, you know, but just let him loaf about the store—like your spotted pet cat yonder, you see."

"Yes, yes, I see, I see—as a spy, eh?"

"Yes. He can keep his ears and eyes on the alert; it won't do any hurt, at the worst, and may do good. I like the lad's eye, and I'll wager my hand he can be trusted."

"In order to do this he would have to be put on track?"

"Yes, but you won't lose anything by it. If his presence were liable to create suspicion, he might occasionally be given some small jobs to do, with the understanding that he was simply there to learn the business."

"Perhaps your plan is a good one. How do you think you would like such a berth, Fritz?"

"You want me to play up der loafer, und keep an eye on efferyody, und when I hear somedings v'ot you want to know, I coomes und dells you apoud it?"

"Yes, that is it exactly."

"But, you vill haff to tell me somedings apoud v'ot you want to know, in order that I vill know v'ot I am to keep watch for."

"Weil, if you will promise to keep everything a secret that you learn, from every living person except myself and Detective Fisk, here, I will take you into my confidence and employ, at a moderate salary to begin with, with an increase as I see that your services merit it."

"I promise upon my honor ash a shendle-

man, to do as you vant, and work yoost der best I can."

"Well, then, listen: This is an extensive jobbing establishment, doing a business of several million dollars yearly. In addition to handling American dry goods and notions both wholesale and retail, we also import from foreign countries costly laces, silks, cloths and jewels—in the latter line especially, we do a heavy business in the way of importing and wholesaling. It is a daily occurrence for us to take in large sums of money, after banking hours, which we must per force leave in the safe here over night. Of late, our cashier, my nephew, whose name is Thomas Ward, has privately complained to myself and partner, Mr. Schloss, that sums of money varying from five to ten dollars, have, on frequent occasions, been extracted from the safe during the night, or, at least, after business hours. To satisfy my partner, Thomas has been suspended from our employ, and Mr. Schloss, in person, has taken charge of the cash department for the last week. But the thefts still continue. No later than last night ten dollars was taken from the safe, when Mr. Fisk, who had been left here on watch, was attracted toward another portion of the establishment by suspicious sounds. Thus, you see, the thief or thieves, are not only bold but adroit and skillful in their work, which makes us the more eager to capture them. It is for the purpose of spotting the culprits that you are to henceforth take up a position as an employee of the firm. Do you comprehend?"

CHAPTER V.

GETTING AT THE CASE.

"YAW—I dink I understand what you vants of me," Fritz replied, "und I'll bet a dollar I catch der t'ief before I'm here a week."

"Well, my boy, if you are successful, you'll not lose anything by it."

"You'd better put him on the other matter, too," Fisk suggested. "He may be successful, there."

"Ah! yes. Now, you see, Fritz, there is another matter that, if you could get at the bottom of it, would be a step toward making your fortune. I suppose you must be aware that there is a duty assessed by our Government on all foreign goods arriving in American ports?"

"I haff heard dot; yes, sir."

"Well, as that duty is very high on costly fabrics and jewels, the fact somewhat lessens the profit on imported goods. Owing to this, certain unscrupulous people have made it their business to smuggle cargoes of for-

eign articles into American markets, without paying duty, and disposing of them at a figure considerably less than we merchants who have to pay duty can afford to do in the same class of goods. But, of late, matters have become more complicated, and everything goes to show that there is a league of smugglers in this vicinity, who drive a paying business at their nefarious trade, and their agents are scattered about the surrounding country, as receivers and disposers of such illegal merchandise. Of late, not only our establishment, but one or two other jobbers in this city, have made a singular and startling discovery—that we have been dealing very considerably in smuggled goods, for which we had never paid a cent. This discovery was made by taking an inventory of our stock, and comparing it with a previous quarterly inventory, and then comparing the two with our purchase and sales-book. The result of the comparison was that we had about five thousand dollars' worth of stock above what we had purchased.

"It was on making this discovery that we privately called in the services of Detective Fisk, as an investigator, and we learn from him that there are at least two other jobbing houses in the same fix. There seems but one solution to the matter—this league of smugglers have agents in our employ, to whom they supply the goods, and these agents watch their opportunity to sell the goods over our own counters, in place of our own stock, and put the money in their own pockets."

"Vel, den you wants to know who dose agents are?—ish dot it?" Fritz asked, taking a meditative squint.

"That is it, exactly, but, you see, it is a business that must needs be conducted with the utmost caution. Were the Custom House authorities to suspect that we were harboring undutied goods, there'd be a big row, and even if we were able to prove ourselves clear of all guilt, the affair would get publicity and be apt to injure our reputation as a business firm. Then, again, it is our aim, by what clew we have got, to trace the matters to the very root by ultimately discovering and breaking up the smugglers' league. To the man who is sucessful in so doing, the authorities will award a handsome reward, I have no doubt."

"And, I'll wager he'll earn his money, too, before he gets at the bottom of it," Fisk said, dryly. "I reckon I'm ordinarily smart in working up such cases, but I'll be jiggered if my closest attention to the case has availed me anything. Still, two heads are always better than one, and maybe our friend, Fritz, will have better luck, for he

can see and do what no one else can, if employed bere in the store."

"I dink I vill like der job," Fritz declared. "But maype I vould go at it somev'at difference as you vould—v'ot den?"

"You can arrange that to suit yourself. If you need money to carry into execution any advisable plan, I will furnish it."

"Vel, den, I loaf apoud der store for awhile, und uff I haff no success, I vill take some sambles of goods, und go oud mit der smaller cities ash a drummer. Pyme-py I find somedings I vant to know—den, vonce I sdrike der track, I follow id up."

"Good plan! You may go now, and return to-morrow morning, by which time I will have it understood about the establishment that you are a wealthy young Jew, who has paid for a privilege to linger about the place for the sake of getting an idea of the business, in view of either purchasing a partnership or starting for yourself. This will satisfy the curiosity that might otherwise arise among our employees, and secure for you courteous attention."

"How many about the place have you taken into your confidence concerning the smuggling business?" Fisk asked thoughtfully.

"Yourself, Mr. Schloss and Fritz, here, aside from myself, are the only ones in the secret."

"It is well. I would advise that you do not permit it to get into the hearing of any other person until actually necessary, as it would be apt to put the guilty parties on guard."

Fritz then left the store, and went back to the pawnbroker's shop, where he had left his grip-sack.

Rebecca was still behind the counter, and welcomed him with a smile.

"Well, what luck, Fritz?" she inquired.

"Der best of luck, Rebecca. Der old man has taken me in ash silent pardner, und I bid fair to own a hal' of der blace afore long."

"Why, Fritz, what do you mean—you don't mean you've got a position?"

"Vel, I should say so, Rebecca. Der old rascal yoost engaged me right avay off, to set around und do noddings. Dot's v'ot a feller gets for lookin' like a reg'lar masher, und dressin' like a Saratoga swell. V'y, Rebecca, you yoost ought to have seen der folks look ad me v'en I go oud on der street! I suppose id vas because I looked so flip—vas id?"

"Yes, that must have been the reason. But I don't understand what you mean by saying you have got a job to sit around and do nothing, Fritz?"

"Vel, dot is all right, Rebecca. Von of

dose times, v'en der grab apple got ripe, I tell you all apoud it. Not now, however. It vas a segret, you see, und vimmens don'd keep segrets worth a hal' of a dollar."

"Oh! Fritz, you're just awful, to speak so disrespectful of the ladies—poor me, of all others. I'm just dying for you to tell me the secret, Fritz!"

"I can't helb id; I know you pe a purdy sblendid girl, Rebecca, und all dot, but I couldn't tell you at bresent, not if you vas to kick ofer der bucket a hal' of dozen times, Rebecca."

"But, Fritz, can't you trust me? I won't give it away—never—never—never! there!"

"Rebecca, v'en I got sdarted up in pizness, I vill trust you for anything you vant, from shoe-buttons und darning needles to a pair of susbenders, but you mustn't ask no questions v'at I am to do at der store. I sit apoud und keeb my ears oben—dot's all."

"Oh! you mean fellow! I see through it all now. They've hired you to keep watch on poor Tom. They're bound to make him trouble if they can, when he's just as innocent as can be."

"How you vas know dot, Rebecca?"

"Because I do. Tom's just the nicest fellow living, and you will say so when you know him—and all the girls are just in love with him."

"Dis veller, Thomas, he vas Mister Harrington's nephew, eh Rebecca?"

"Yes, and it was just through that mean Dolph Daniels that he got discharged. Money was missing from the safe, you see, on several occasions. Tom he complained of the loss, and the firm held a consultation. I heard Dolph tell Mr. Schloss that as Tom was the cashier he ought to be able to account for the loss, as no one aside from him and the firm had access to the safe. Dolph also told Mr. Schloss that Tom was in the habit of frequenting faro-rooms evenings and playing and drinking, and that as it required no little capital to carry on this sort of business, and as Tom's income was but limited, it was but natural to suppose that he must acquire the means from some other source. And, Fritz, it was only a few days after this that poor Tom was discharged."

Fritz sat down and gazed thoughtfully at the floor, while he ran his fingers meditatively through his hair.

"Fritz," he was saying to himself, "der is vork ahead, und off you can make some dings clear, you vill make a hit—right oud vrom der shoulder. Old vimmens Shrimp, Fritz don' vas ask some odds off you den!"

To Rebecca he said:

"Den you don'd vas dink Tom is der guilty one, Rebecca?"

"No, I don't!" emphatically. "Tom may

be a little wild sometimes, like other young men, but he's brains and good sense enough not to be carried away by any base passion. Why, if you could see how disconsolate and unhappy he is since Mr. Harrington has forbidden him the house and store, your heart would go out for him."

"Und who is this Dolph Daniels?"

"Oh! he's just the surliest, meanest man in the store, and nobody likes him. He is Mr. Harrington's nephew also, and a half-brother of Tom. There's quite a bit of romance connected with the case too, Fritz. You see Mr. Harrington and Mr. Schloss are to dissolve partnership soon, Mr. Schloss returning to Germany and Mr. Harrington continuing the business. In this event it has long been understood that Mr. Harrington was to take one of his nephews in as a partner in the business, which would be quite a lift for the chosen one. Which of the nephews was to be the lucky man has never been announced, though we have all rather calculated it would be Tom, he being the merchant's favorite. But, since his discharge, it looks as if Dolph would be the man. And I do really believe he is trying his best to influence Mr. Harrington against Tom."

"Misder Harrington don'd vas der man to be easily influenced against a person. He vould quicker side in der favor, unless he had good reason to der gontrary," Fritz decided, judging by what he had seen of the merchant.

"Oh! yes; he's a nice, good man, but he's awfully in error, now," Rebecca asserted, putting her plump little arms akimbo, and looking very wise. "You see, there is another thing to consider, too, Fritz. There is a woman in the case."

Fritz put up his hands, imploringly.

"If she is von old maid, don'd dells me nodding apoud it," he said.

"But she isn't; she's a young maid, and a very desirable one at that, sir. You see, some years ago, one of Mr. Harrington's old college chums died, and bequeathed to his care a little daughter accompanied with a sum of twenty-five thousand dollars. For bringing her up, Mr. Harrington was to have the interest of the money; when she arrived at a marriageable age, he and she were to agree upon the choice of a husband for her, and on their marriage, the money was to be divided equally between the bride and the man of her selection—his share to be used in purchasing a partnership in some good business."

"Shimminy dunder! I wonder off I can't go up und make a mash mit her; vile my clothes ish new, Rebecca?"

"And leave poor me without a beau?" reproachingly.

"Oh, vell, pizness is pizness, Rebecca, and a feller wants to make bargains v'ere der money is der most. You see, I could see you home effery night v'idoit interferin'."

"Oh! Fritz—you're just awful! I don't want any second-hand fellow."

"But v'ile you are doin' a segond-hand pizness, Rebecca, v'ot is der difference?"

"Oh! a great deal, sir. Besides, you've no show; Miss Rossie—Rosalind is her name—is of American blood, and wouldn't have a poor ignorant Dutchman like you. Now, you see, Dolph Daniels and Tom are both in love with Rossie, which makes another reason why Dolph should desire to injure Tom, who has hitherto commanded the preference, until forbidden to enter the Harrington house, or speak to Rossie. I believe it was as good as understood that Tom and Rossie were engaged, with the consent of Mr. Harrington, until Tom's discharge. Now, Fritz, do you know what I want you to do?"

"V'en you tell me, I know all apout it."

"Of course. Well, I want you to intercede for Tom, with Mr. Harrington. He would take it from you quicker than from any of the rest of us; I want you to sound Tom's praise constantly in his ears, and above ali, keep an eye on Dolph Daniels. I have an idea he would bear watching."

"Vell, I vill do dot, Rebecca. I don'd took some great fancy to him, myself. Now, I must go and find a boarding place."

"But, Fritz, hold on! I was speaking to uncle about you, and he said you could board with us, if you like."

"Dot would suit me firs'd trate, Rebecca, so I could be near you. Und ven I haff nodding to do, I mind der pawnshop, eh? I'll bet a half a dollar I'd make your uncle bankrupt in six weeks."

"Oh! no; you must only pay half of the value of anything you take in Fritz, and sell it again for twice what you gave for it. That is the way to do business, honestly and successfully."

"Oh! ish dot der way? Vell, I dink I start a pawnbroker shop, myself one off dose days, Rebecca, v'en I get through settling up dot pizness apoud der— Oh! dunder, I forgot. I'll bet a half a dollar I giff der whole t'ing avay, yet."

So Fritz became installed in his new home, with a job before him that required three essentials—close attention, shrewdness and secrecy!

CHAPTER VI.

A RAP WITH A SLUNG-SHOT

THE day being as yet half unspent Fritz strolled out to see the sights.

While standing on Chestnut street, he saw a man pass, whose face was familiar to him.

It was one of the two portly individuals whose conversation he had partly overheard on the cars.

Their conversation now for the first recurred to Fritz, in connection with what he had heard at the store of Schloss and Harrington, and he slapped his head as if to stir up more ideas.

"I bet a half-dollar I vas on der trail, right avay off!" he said. "Dose vellers vas talking apoud some cargo vo't dey haff oud at sea, und couldn't get ashore. Dot makes 'em smugglers. Der next thing is to find varebouds dey hang oud, who ish deir associates, und who deir names vas."

And the amateur detective walked away on the track of the portly man—on his first trail.

The man soon entered a billiard room, on Eleventh street, and challenged the proprietor to play, who at once consented.

Fritz followed boldly into the place, purchased a cigar, and sat down to watch the game.

Two men were engaged in playing a game, at another table, close by. Both were rather good-looking fellows, whose genteel attire indicated respectable social positions. One was a brunette the other rather a blonde with a hungry, pained expression about his mouth and eyes.

The two were talking, as they played, and Fritz could not avoid listening to what they said.

"Pshaw!" the darker youth was saying, "you must brave up. There's more chances in the world than one, and it don't pay to cry over spilt milk, Tom."

"But you see, Jack, it's uncomfortable, in more than one sense. Why, the Governor don't notice me when we meet face to face, and it wasn't more than an hour ago that I met Rossie, and she drew aside her skirts in passing by, as though afraid I would touch her. I tell you I'm the most miserable fellow out, and I was tempted to go shoot myself."

"Dot is Tom, v'ot Rehecca tolle me of," Fritz silently concluded. "He don'd look so much like a rascal ash his step-brother."

The supposed smuggler had by this time concluded his game, paid for it, and departed. Again Fritz followed at a respectful distance, and without discovery he tracked the portly man to the hallway of a place on Sixth street which led up a flight of stairs to a hall immediately over a saloon. At the foot of the stairs a tin placard was tacked to the door, bearing the following notice:

"THIS HALL TO LET
FOR MEETINGS, BALLS, FESTIVALS, ETC.
"APPLY AT THE SALOON."

The portly man went up-stairs—Fritz turned and retraced his footsteps toward Market street.

"Dot is der place where der meeting is ter be held, der-night, at ten o'clock," he said, reflectively. "I must see who goes into dot hall."

To linger long in that vicinity might excite the suspicions of the smugglers, as well as the police; hence he conceived a plan that promised to work well. He borrowed an old suit of clothing at the pawnbroker shop, of Rebecca, together with a wooden tray; then at a bakery he procured buns, cakes and pretzels.

Before eight o'clock that night he had taken up his stand on the curb, only a few steps from the door to the hall, where he could dispose of his eatables, were any one disposed to invest, and at the same time notice each and every person who should enter the door, leading to the hall.

It was well on toward ten o'clock before any one came along, and went up-stairs.

The first one was the man whom Fritz had dogged that afternoon.

He gave a sharp, searching glance at the assumed peddler as he entered the hallway, but went on up-stairs without saying anything.

Soon after two rough, bewhiskered and villainous looking sailors followed his example; after them a roughly-dressed man who was the possessor of the longest and heaviest black beard Fritz had ever seen; next came two well-dressed men, who looked as though they might be prominent business merchants; then followed several others—all wearing heavy beards, which Fritz at once concluded were false.

The last individual to go up the stairs was the most noticeable of the lot, being quite tall, and very thin—in fact, was the leanest-looking specimen of humanity Fritz had ever seen, in face as well as in form, and was apparently of a very nervous temperament, judging from a habit he had of looking about on either side, as if fearing pursuit.

Instead of going up the stairs as the others had done, he took his position in the doorway at the foot of the stairs, and stood there like some grim, superannuated statue.

"Oh! ish *dot* it?" Fritz thought. "I dink I see how dose vellers work it now. Dey don'd vas let anypody play eavesdropper."

As the thin party continued to stand guard, and seeing no chance to learn any-

thing more at that time, Fritz succeeded in disposing of his stock to the street boys at the rate of three cakes for a cent, and went back to his new home.

Though not exactly satisfied with the result of the evening's work, he was thankful for what little clew he had obtained.

That same evening Mr. Harrington was detained in town later than usual, and it was after ten o'clock when he started for his residence, which was on Ridge avenue, in the northern part of the city.

His route brought him to Franklin Square, which he concluded to cross, rather than go a long walk around it, and he accordingly entered it and strode along, no thought of danger entering his mind, despite the fact that the pretty Park has had none too savory a reputation for some years past, it being a nightly haunt of the rough and hardly respectable crowd of humanity that frequent the low dives and variety dens of Vine street and vicinity.

Half-way through the Square had he got when he met two low-browed fellows, one of whom said to the other:

"That's him, 'the dirty b'aste! Hit him for his mother, Riley!"

The next instant there was a whiz through the air, and the merchant was conscious of being struck in the face with some hard object, and falling to the ground, his senses partly leaving him—while his assailants hurried on.

A moment later there were hasty footsteps, and Tom Ward ran up to where his uncle lay, partly raised upon his elbow, and gasping for breath.

"Why, Uncle John, is this you?—What has happened—what is the matter?" he demanded, raising the merchant to his feet.

"Matter enough. Some unmannerly wretch hit me in the face with a slung-shot!" the merchant gasped. "There! there! boy; don't bother to call the police. You know I detest publicity obtained by police-court advertising. If you will take my arm until I overcome this dizziness, we will walk toward my home."

"Certainly, uncle. Shall I not call a carriage?"

"No, I prefer to walk. I shall soon feel better, and am thankful the matter is no worse. I ought to have known better than to come through this place, I suppose; with the hard name the daily papers give it."

They soon left the Park and walked along in silence for a ways; then the dismissed nephew said:

"Well, uncle, I suppose things go better at the store since I left, eh?"

And there was a bit of irony in his tone that Mr. Harrington at once perceived.

"No, Tom, my boy; I have failed to see that your absence improves matters any. There is infernal trickery somewhere that defies my comprehension."

"Strange—and yet not so strange either, considering the number of your employees. I hope and trust you will find the guilty one before I return from my voyage."

"Your voyage, boy?"

"Yes, uncle. I have a chance to ship as a deck-hand on an excursion craft, going to Italy, and I guess it will be my best chance. Anything is preferable to remaining here, where I am widely known, under the existing circumstances, you know. The boat sails day after to-morrow, I believe."

"Tom, you must do nothing of the kind. The idea is simply preposterous, sir—you, the son of an aristocratic family going as a deck-hand—hump! Go slow, my boy, go slow! Everything may seem against you now, but do nothing rash. To-night Schloss withdrew from the firm, and henceforth I am the sole proprietor. Although I am not prepared to believe you guilty, I have my confidence lessened in you by sundry little reports to the effect that you drink and gamble. My boy, this indulgence will never make a man of you—it will ruin you and your prospects forever."

"I do not deny these charges, uncle, nor do I think I need to ask who is your informer. I have drank and gambled occasionally, like the average young man, who naturally begins life a little wild, and grows calmer with maturity, but I can say I have been careful to abstain from excess in either instance. I can break off very easily, and mean to do so."

"A good resolve, my boy—a commendable resolve. Honesty and sobriety are jewels more valuable than the most brilliant diamond. And, Tom, I have been considering, to-night, the advisability of taking you back into my employ—not as a cashier, but as a clerk. Of course it is an humble position compared to your former one, but I'd rather have you in under my eye, than on the streets. In case of such an event, I should require your solemn promise that you would abstain from drink and gambling and all kindred associations."

"You can have the promise in those words, uncle, with or without reinstatement in your employ. As for the position, I should deem it an honorable chance to prove my honesty and integrity as a man, and as a gentleman."

"Well, well, I am glad to hear you say so—because I see you are not ashamed of a lesser position. You may resume your ser-

vices in my employ, to-morrow, at a salary of ten dollars per week, taking the place of Jenkens, who goes on the road in the interests of the establishment. Your salary, with strict economy will pay your board and clothing, and lessen your supply for chances of temptation. You will not resume your position as a member of my family, at present, or at least, not until I see fit to have you. As far as Rossie is concerned, I dare say she will recognize you, but shall not accord you your former place in her confidence and esteem, did she so desire, until this cloud is beyond a doubt lifted from over your head. If you desire to please me, sir, you will please to refrain from addressing her, except when addressed, and then only in the way you would any lady acquaintance—civilly. Do you understand, sir?" and there was now no pity in the merchant's tones.

"I understand, perfectly, and it shall be as you desire," Tom said, bowing his head in acquiescence, although his spirit rebelled. "By the way, I saw Rebecca, to-night, and she said you had made an accession to your staff of employees."

"Ah! yes—a German Jew—a dry, odd and clumsy fellow, yet withal a sharp lad, when experience and good training properly develop him, I take it. I've got him on purpose to keep an eye on you," with a rather gruff laugh.

"Well, I'm glad of that. I hope and trust he will serve me honestly, as well as yourself."

Soon after they reached the merchant's mansion, where Tom took leave, and returned to his own lodgings.

It had been a lucky hit, for him, which had dropped Mr. Harrington, it would seem, but there was yet a darker lining to develop in the cloud that hung over him, before the silver lining should come to view.

CHAPTER VII.

DANIELS AND FELICE.

On the following morning Fritz presented himself at the establishment of Mr. Harrington, and took up his situation as genteel loafer and store detective. Rebecca had also returned to resume her position as saleswoman, and Tom Ward's pleasant face was seen behind one of the jewelry counters.

A cordial welcome had been accorded him by the employees, when it was learned that he had been reinstated; even Dolph Daniels had manifested enough interest to drop around, in his cool and cynical patronizing way and say:

"Hello! glad to see you back again. Was saying to the senior, that I couldn't see any harm in your coming back. Hope you'll find

your new position very lucrative and desirable."

Then he passed on, for which Tom was not sorry, for he did not like his half-brother any too well, and knew too that his dislike was more than fully reciprocated.

Daniels had heard of Fritz from Mr. Harrington, but had not been informed of his real errand at the store. He had at once taken a dislike to the new-comer, and resolved to torment him whenever an opportunity afforded, for there was no danger of such an action being resented by Mr. Harrington.

He approached Fritz not long after his arrival, and slapped him familiarly on the shoulder.

"Well, my son, what is there I can do for you, this morning?" he asked, patronizingly.

"Anything you wish to purchase?"

"Noddings," Fritz replied, briefly.

"Oh! then you are perhaps the rich young man Mr. Harrington was speaking about, who has come here to visit and watch the workings of the establishment, in view of starting a similar enterprise yourself?"

"I shouldn't wonder uff I vas dot same veller," Fritz assented condescendingly.

"Ah! yes. Well, I trust it will not take you long to get an idea of our business, so that you can get a start for yourself. We do a very extensive trade, and it probably would require more time than you have to spend, to investigate the whole workings of each department, but you can in a few days obtain a general idea of the store's transactions."

"I dinks I dake my time to it and learn it all," Fritz replied, turning away, as if not desiring to converse with the foreman.

"Humph! I dare say you will stay much longer than you are wanted," Daniels muttered to himself. "If your business here is an enigma to the rest, it isn't to me. Ha! ha! no."

Fritz during the forenoon devoted himself to inspecting the character and amount of business done on the first floor, which was exclusively a retail department, handling costly silks, satins, laces, trimmings and jewels—mostly diamonds.

The latter, however, were kept in a close case, more for samples than for regular retail trade.

Among the clerks Fritz endeavored to single out those whose looks might indicate an untrustworthy character. One, a young French-woman who superintended the diamond counter, did not favorably impress him.

She was a thin, angular person of perhaps nineteen or twenty years of age, with a deathlike complexion, pearly white teeth, a decidedly sinister cast, of countenance, and

sharp, wicked black eyes ever on the alert and gleaming. She spoke in broken French sometimes—then, again, in perfect English. Her every movement was cat-like; she impressed Fritz as being a deceitful, fiery-tempered woman, whose disposition for evil was greater than that for good.

During the forenoon, while sitting behind a bale of goods, he saw her come from behind the counter and stop Daniels, who was passing her.

Neither of them noticed the "German Jew's" proximity, and that portion of the store being deserted at the moment, they were not so guarded in their conversation, as would otherwise have been the case.

With all eagerness, Fritz listened, for, somehow, he liked neither of them, and felt that from them he had something of importance to learn.

The Frenchwoman was the first to speak, and her voice was rather harsh and hissing in its tone.

"Ze Monsieur Tom come back!" she said, significantly. "Ze grand plan is a failure, Monsieur Dolph—ze bad failure."

"Pshaw, no! I rather expected the old man would take him back. He, however, has only taken him in on test, and we must manage it that the test is unsatisfactory to the Governor—do you hear? Tom must go forth again, forever banished. I'd be a fool, you know, when it is almost as good as settled that I am to be a partner in this concern, to let any brotherly feeling interfere with my preventing Tom from getting back into the old man's graces."

"Or even to let him get ze place monsieur hopes to gain in ze pretty Rosalind's affection? Bah! you reckon wildly, Monsieur Dolph! You zink when ze good fortune come you will cast ze old love off for ze new, but it shall nevare be—nevare, Monsieur Dolph Daniels!"

The foreman scowled, and uttered an exclamation.

"Pshaw! when will you cease to be foolish, Felice? Haven't I promised everything reasonable when I get the coveted position? Let me hear no more of this complaining."

"But ze Ma'moiselle Rosalind? Ze report say zat Monsieur Dolph pay her ze loverly attention since poor Tom no longer is allowed ze pleasure!—how about zat?" and the girl's hands opened and shut, nervously, while her eyes glared.

"Report be hanged! If I do treat the girl courteously, what does it signify? You know it has always been the Governor's desire that one of his nephews should marry her—preferably the one he proposes to make his partner. Therefore, you see, it is but natural that I must for a time devote

some attention to her, in order to humor the old man's whim."

"I no like ze idea," Felice persisted, petulantly. "By an' by ze Monsieur Dolph fall in love wiz Rosalind's fortune, and ze infatuation for Felice be a t'ing of ze past."

"Bah! no! I have promised to declare our nuptials as soon as I am made a partner, and shall do so, if you continue to help me, and serve me faithfully. 'Sh! here comes some one"—and with this, they separated, and Fritz was apparently sound asleep when Daniels crossed over into the aisle where he was seated.

The clerk was not easily deceived, however.

"Here, sir—we do not allow any one snoozing about this establishment!" he cried, seizing Fritz by the collar and jerking him to his feet. "What do you mean by playing eavesdropper, you Dutch rascal?"

Fritz started and rubbed his eyes, sleepily.

"V'ot ish dot?" he asked, feigning surprise. "Vos der a fire? Who vos hurt?"

"You'll get hurt, mark my word, if I catch you spying around again!" Daniels hissed, fiercely.

"How do you know?" Fritz said, with a grin. "I'll bet a half-dollar you had better mind your own pizness, or I'll giff you avay."

"We'll see about that," was the growling retort, and the foreman turned on his heel, and walked away.

He did not enter complaint to Mr. Harrington, as he had at first resolved to do. The words of Fritz put him on guard, and he realized that in one sense he was at the mercy of the young Dutchman. To incur his enmity would be to provoke an exposure.

A week passed. Fritz had been alert and watchful, but had discovered nothing having a bearing upon his errand.

The losses from the safe had ceased from the time of his arrival, and everything seemed to work in order.

Fritz was puzzled, but no more than were Mr. Harrington and Fisk, the detective, with whom he held frequent consultations.

"I've about made up my mind that the trouble is over," the merchant said, at their latest interview, on Tuesday night, after business hours, just eight days from the date of Fritz's commencing duty. "Everything seems to work right, and I am inclined to think the right man was removed from the cashier's office, after all."

"I don't believe it!" Fisk declared.

"Dot ish v'ot I dink," Fritz assented. "I'll bet a half dollar deir is not more honest man in der store ash Tom. Und, v'ot ish more, der matter don'd vos mit. yet. avile.

Der parties vas smell rats, und dink best to let dings rest quiet till der wind blows ofer, or plows me oud."

"Then, you think that your mission here is suspected?"

"By the guilty ones, yes."

"But, have you any suspicions yet, who they are?"

"Oh! I haff got a couple of private opinions, but noddings in particular to back 'em, that haff a bearing on der case. I haff von discovery, but I don'd dink best to give it avay, not yoost yet. It vill keep, and maybe serve to sdrengthen a chain of criminal effidences, later—see?"

"A very professional idea, that," Fisk said, admiringly. "As I told Mr. Harrington in the outset, it may require months to work up this case, but I think that between us we can fetch it to a focus. I am watching the supposed smugglers that you, Fritz, put me on track of, but they're as crafty and guarded as can be. Which convinces me that they are warned by the confederates here at the store, who at present are so quiet."

"Perhaps you are right; but I wish the matter were settled."

"There ish von thing I would like to haff you do, Misder Harrington," Fritz said—"more ash like an experiment den any odder dings else."

"And what is this, my boy?"

"I would like to haff you put Mister Tom back in der cashier's office."

"Indeed? What object can you have in such a wish?"

"Vel, I dellys you, Mister Harrington. From v'ot I haff learned und observed, I think der ish somebody working against Mr. Tom—trying to influence you und odders against him, and trying to bring up disparaging t'ings apoud him."

"Pshaw! This is surely an idle fancy. Who in the world do you imagine could have any object in injuring him?"

"Vel you find dot oud v'en der proper time comes. In fact, I know somebody would be tickled like dunder ef Tom could be found guilty of anything v'ot would forever disgrace and ruin him."

"But, even admitting this unreasonable inference, what object can there be in restoring Thomas to his former position?"

"Vel, I dellys you dot. I suspect der same ones dot are working against Tom, to be the authors of der robberies. If such ish der case, und Tom is reinstated ash cashier, I'll bet a half dollar, der vill be a resume off der sdeal—yoost to throw der suspicion on him—see? Uff dot is a correct surmise, I vill know somedings apout it, for to-morrow night, I

vill stay in the store, and see who robs the safe."

"By Jove! the Dutchman is a genius!" Fisk exclaimed. "I rather judge he's not very far from the bull's-eye, in this thing."

"Well, I am both surprised, and incredulous—and, again, eager," Mr. Harrington said.

"While I am doubtful of Fritz's suspicions, I am ready to believe anything that can be proved beyond doubt. To-morrow morning Tom shall take charge of the office again. To-morrow night you, Fritz, and I will remain in the store, and try our hands at watching."

"Good! Dot is v'ot I want. But, der is still von odder thing—if ve discover somebody robbing der safe, you can bet a half-dollar dot person vil be disguised, whoever it is. I vant you to note one thing—compare dot robber's size vid dot of Misder Tom, but don't make no attempt to discover more yoost at bresent. Time enough for dot later. V'ot I vant to convince you of now is dot Tom is *not* guilty. Humanidy effery dime, pefore der pocketbook—see? Und v'en Tom ish cleared, und effery ding made right in dot direction, den ve will work carefully on der odder case, and make no arrests undil we can gobble 'em up all at von time."

"What is your opinion in this matter, Fisk?" the merchant asked, perplexedly and undecided.

"Well, sir," the officer replied, "my advice is that we give the young man the reins and let him lead, while we follow his guidance. For my part, I ain't ashamed to allow that he is more fitted to handle the case, judging by the way he goes at it, than I am, with all my experience. His scent is keen as a hound's."

So it was decided to give Fritz the whole responsibility and direction of working up the case, which was a far higher compliment than had ever been paid the poor bound boy; and he might well be pardoned for feeling a little proud over the character of his position.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BURGLAR.

THE next morning Tom Ward was told by Mr. Harrington to resume his place and position as cashier for a time, to see how matters would shape, and the young man accordingly did so, although more than a little surprised.

His reinstatement was also a matter of astonishment to the other employees—most of all, to Dolph Daniels.

Fritz, who was never off duty as a spy, noted this fact, and saw Daniels hold an interview with the Frenchwoman, but this

time he was not close enough to hear anything. He had no need to surmise, however, of whom they were talking—he knew that Tom was the object of their close conference.

During the day Miss Rosalind Black called at the store to see her father by adoption.

She was richly attired—a pretty, modest-looking young lady, of rather frail and delicate appearance, yet intellectual and of a winning disposition.

The merchant received her warmly, and they were closeted in his office for some time; then, leaning on his arm, she came forth, and walked about the store.

As they passed the cashier's office, she smiled in at poor Tom, which sent the young man off to a seventh heaven of delight, and he inwardly swore not to give up the hope of winning her while he had youth and strength.

Daniels had business on the top floor of the establishment, about this time. He had no desire to meet the one of his present choice and aspirations, with Felice's sharp eyes watching him, and therefore he got as far out of the way as was convenient.

During their ramble about the store, Mr. Harrington and Rossie came upon Fritz, who had taken advantage of a lull in trade to have a chat with Rebecca.

"Fritz, this is my adopted pet, Rossie!" Mr. Raymond said. "Rossie, Mr. Snyder."

"Ish dot so?" Fritz uttered, surveying the young lady from head to foot, critically. "Vel, how you vas, Miss Rossie?"

And he put out his hand, cordially.

"Quite well, sir, thank you," Rossie replied, touching his hand.

Then she greeted Rebecca—who was a general favorite about the store, with a kiss, and they passed on.

Fritz watched eagerly, hoping he would get a chance to speak to her in private, but no such an opportunity was afforded him, and she soon left the store.

Determined not to be beat in this manner, he put on his hat and followed her at a respectable distance.

She soon entered an ice-cream parlor, and he followed her here, and took a seat at the same table.

"You vill excuse me, von't you, for dis seeming familiarity?" he said, in a low voice; "I want to talk with you apout Misder Tom."

"Indeed! Is Mr. Ward your friend?" and a faint expression of surprise crept into her pensive face.

"Vel, I guess he vas; und better ash dot, I am his friend. I heard that you don'd vas receive Misder Tom as a suitor any more,

but haff caught on to dot veller, Dolph Daniels?"

"You are very presuming, sir! What can this matter interest you?" and this time there was haughtiness in her tone of speech.

But Fritz went on, unabashed.

"Vel, I know, Miss Rossie, ma'be it don'd vas any off my business, but I vas a great snoozer for givin' advice, und I vant to speak mit yo'. I dink I make you t'ink better of Tom, und less off dot other fellow, off I dellys you somedings I know."

"What have you to offer against Mr. Daniels?"

"Let me answer by asking—don'd you vas care more for Tom ash Daniels? Do you believe him guilty?"

"Dolph Daniels I respect as a courteous gentleman; Mr. Ward was my accepted lover, until he so far forgot himself, as not only to bring disgrace upon himself, but in the same misstep to place me in an unenviable position. This is the extent of what I have to say on the subject. If he is guilty, he must deeply feel his own folly. If he is not guilty I am very sorry for him—very sorry."

"Und if it ish prove dot he vas innocent, you vill take him back und drive dose pained expressions from his face, yoost like you once did before der difficulty arose at the store?"

"Well, perhaps, Mr. Peacemaker—I—I really don't know what to say, sir—your questions are very personal."

"Vel, what of it? Don'd I vas your fader's confidential clerk, and don' I vas workin' for your interests? Yoost you remember dot of you get Misder Tom, you vill get a nice, honest feller—but, above all, of you don'd vant some odder vimmen's fingers in your hair, don'd you haff nodding to do mit dot Dolph Daniels. A vord to der wise is sufficient."

Then rising and tipping his hat, he took his leave.

That evening about seven o'clock, Mr. Harrington and Fritz made their way into the store by a disused entrance, and concealed themselves behind a tier of baled goods, over the tops of which they could command a view of the entrance to the merchant's private office, where the safe was located.

As the store was promptly closed at six, each evening, and the key delivered to Mr. Harrington, no one had any business there at a later hour, except for a felonious or secret purpose.

It was not until after the hands of the clock in the tower of Independence Hall pointed to the hour of two, A. M., that our watchers'

patient vigil was rewarded by something to break the monotony.

They heard the front door softly open and close, and somebody walking in the front part of the store.

Directly, the stealthy footsteps sounded coming toward the rear part, but the approach was slow, and first on one side and then on the other side of the room, which convinced the watchers that the person, who ever it was, was taking the precaution of looking around to see if there were not any spies to be found.

Directly the person passed along before the bales, behind which they were concealed.

By the half-covered lantern which she bore they caught one glimpse, and saw that it was a woman, or else a man dressed in woman's clothes, with a vail over the face to conceal the identity, and the form wrapped in a long loose duster.

"See?" Fritz whispered, triumphantly. "Ish dot der figure off Misder Tom? Nixy! I told you he don'd vas der guilty party."

"Thank God for that," the merchant returned, in a whisper. "The form is too tall to belong to Tom, that is certain, and yet I fail to recognize it. Let's make a rush and capture the bold burglar!"

"Stop! nodding of der kind must pe done! To attempt to capture der party, now, would be to forever seal der segret of der identity of der league, ash you can bet a half-dollar dish veller wouldn't giff der odder ones avay."

"True. But it makes my blood fairly boil to note the audacity of this outrageous proceeding."

The female burglar soon became satisfied that she was unwatched, evidently, for she went to the office door and unlocked it, and entered the apartment.

From their distant position the watchers could not note her movements in the office, owing to the darkness in the store, but it was not many moments ere she came out, and locked the door behind her.

She then quitted the store as quietly as she had entered it, after which Mr. Harrington and Fritz quitted their place of concealment.

"We will see how much is gone," the merchant said, "and then go home, a little the wiser, at least. Have you any idea who that woman was, Fritz?"

"My opinion is about the same now, ash pefore," returned Fritz. "I vas purdy sure off my game—now, I vas satisfied; but I prefer not to give any names, just yet."

Examination proved that twenty dollars had been taken from the safe.

"Dey vas makin' oop for lost time!" Fritz said with a chuckle. "Pyme-by they vil

need id all, to pay der shudge und court-house."

Nothing was said of the night's discovery, by either Fritz or his employer, when they went to the store the next morning, but Tom Ward soon entered the office, with hat and cane in hand, ready for the street.

"Mr. Harrington," he said, "I am sorry to say that I do not care to remain in your employ any longer, under the existing circumstances, as some evil hand seems to work against me with a manifest object to make me seem guilty of what I have never done. I find that there is twenty dollars missing from your safe this morning, and I have been waiting to apprise you of my withdrawal from your employ, not caring to work where circumstances are so unpleasantly in my favor. Presumably you will not object to releasing me."

"On the contrary, Thomas, you are to continue in the position of cashier, at your former salary, for the present, it having been proven to my satisfaction, last night, that you are not guilty!"

"Thank Heaven! Are you sure, sir—are you satisfied beyond a doubt?" the young man asked, putting forth his hand eagerly.

"Quite sure, Tom. I saw the thief, last night—or enough to satisfy me it was not you, and I am glad to know it. I have arranged to have you again take up your home with me, a month hence; in the mean time I think you will find Rossie as thankful that you are guiltless, as myself. You may also thank Fritz here, for to him you owe a debt of gratitude for having sufficient faith in your innocence to enable him to solve this ugly mystery."

"And I do thank you from the bottom of my heart, until you can be more substantially rewarded," Tom cried, turning and seizing Fritz by the hands, tears of joy and gratitude glistening in his eyes.

Fritz having satisfied himself as to who were to be suspected, could not resist the temptation of celebrating the event by having a little fun at the expense of 'most any one who should offer as a target for his ventriloquial powers.

During the forenoon he saw Daniels take off his coat and lay it on a bale of goods, while he was engaged in assisting a porter in removing a heavy box.

Taking the coat Fritz carried it around to the lighter side of the store—where, by the way, there were a number of ladies and gentlemen engaged in making purchases—and he was engaged in examining the texture of the cloth, when Daniels discovered him, and approached, angrily.

"What are you doing with my coat, you infernal Jew?" he cried fiercely, making a dive for the coat.

But, Fritz eluded him, and sprung high up, on a tier of bales.

"Yoost you keep avay, off you don'd vas want me to smash dose eggs, you haff in der bockets, here," he replied.

"There's no eggs about my coat! Give it to me, instantly, sir!" Daniels cried, nearly beside himself with rage.

"What is the matter, here?" demanded Mr. Harrington, coming along.

"Matter enough—that Dutch blockhead has my coat, and I want him to give it up."

"But, der vas eggs in it; you haff pen stealin' eggs!" Fritz persisted, with a grin. "Call de bolicemons!"

"You lie, sir—you lie! There's not an egg in my coat!" Daniels cried.

"I'll bet you yoost a half-dollar on dot!" the boy declared, thrusting his hand into one of the side pockets. "Why, py shimmy der is a whole hen's-nest here, hen, und all. I dink she was setting for to hatch oud. leedle chickens!"

And the angry cluck of a setting hen was distinctly heard, together with a fluttering sound as if she were attempting to escape.

"Ah! here is an egg!" Fritz said drawing forth his hand, and holding up what all perceived was indeed an egg. "I will lay dot here bēside me, on the bale, and see what else I can find."

Once more he dived into the pocket, and this time brought forth a handful of hen's feathers, and laid them beside the egg.

"I am hen-clined to think dat don'd vas eggsactly v'ot I vant by der vay I pullet oud," he grinned. "Ah! here ish more eggs."

And he took a half a dozen eggs, to all appearances, from the pocket, one at a time, and deposited them on top of his perch.

"Pretty good magic!" laughed one of the bystanders.

"Ah, I see!" Daniels growled; "he has no eggs at all."

"If you t'ink dot, maybe you haff no objections of my throwing one at you," Fritz said, picking one up.

"Yes, I'll give you leave," the foreman said angrily.

The next instant an egg—and genuine, too—struck him between the eyes, and smashed, its contents running down over his face.

CHAPTER IX.

A DIABOLICAL PROCEEDING.

THE laughter that followed at Daniels's sad predicament, was something indescribable.

No sham was there about that egg, as the enraged foreman swore, as he turned away toward the wash-room.

Mr. Harrington enjoyed the joke heartily, but privately warned Fritz against any further tricks about the store.

A week passed by.

Tom continued as clerk of cash, and he and Rossie were once more seen together frequently.

Although there was a constant drainage upon the cash, not a word of the fact went out beyond Mr. Harrington, Fritz, Tom and Fisk the detective.

As the reader has probably surmised, Fritz suspected no one less than Dolph Daniels of being the black sheep, with the French-woman as an aide.

Fritz had watched them narrowly, and the more he saw them, the stronger grew his belief in their guilt.

"Der vil be somet'ing to preak der monotony, purdy soon," Fritz remarked, one day, to Fisk, whom he made his confidant in everything, including his suspicions. "I'll bet a half dollar der is to be a big sensation, and dot Mr. Tom gets the worst off it. Dot snoozer Daniels ish vatching Tom like a hawk, vos to get a deal in on him, und off I don'd vas mistaken, he'll make some effort der spring a trap. He don'd can stand it mooch longer to see der gal giff her attention to Tom, ven only a short dime a vile ago it vas different. Yes—you yoost mark my vord—der vill pe a pig kersblosion, purdy quick, for which some one vill suffer."

And it came sooner than had been suspected, even for Fritz.

That day, when he was lounging about the store, Tom Ward came from the cashier's office, and approached him.

"Good-morning, Fritz," he said. Then lowering his tone he continued: "Fritz, would you be willing to do a fellow a good turn, if it was in your power?"

"You bet! V'ot is it, Misder Tom—trouble?"

"Yes. An old gambling debt, you see—contracted six months ago, and never settled. The man says he must have his money, by ten to-day, or he'll lay the matter before uncle. That must never be, as I promised him good things of myself, and it would be as good as throw me out of his employ to have him get wind of this debt business."

"Vel, I feel yoost ash anxious apoud id, like you do. V'ot is to be done?"

"I'll tell you. I have a ring here that Rossie gave me, valued at two hundred dollars—double the amount of the debt I owe to Dupree."

"I want you to take it to Rebecca's uncle and get me a hundred dollars on it, for a

couple of months; by that time I can redeem it, and no one will ever be the wiser for it."

"Vel, I vil do dot, Mr. Tom. I vould do 'most anyt'ing for you, rather than see you in trouble. Haf you got der ring?"

"It is in the show-case here, where I placed it in a little box till you should want it. Wait and I'll get it!" and he stepped behind the counter and procured a little ring box from the show-case of jewelry."

"Here it is, in the box," and he handed it to Fritz. "Get what you can on it, for me. It is a rare stone, as the pawnbroker will tell you."

"I vil go right oud und see Rebecca's uncle," Fritz said, receiving the tin box, without examining its contents.

"Help! help! mon Dieu! ze Rubenstein solitaire is gone from ze show-case!" screamed Felice, at this moment.

"What?" cried Daniels, springing from behind another counter.

"What?" cried Mr. Harrington, in alarm, he and his ward entering the store just in time to hear the French girl's cry:

"Ze solitaire—ze priceless Rubenstein solitaire ring—it is gone from ze show-case! It was here not five minutes ago."

"Then the thief cannot have yet escaped!" the merchant cried excitedly, for the ring was of great value. "Ah!" and his eyes rested for the first upon Tom and Fritz—the former deathly pale, as he comprehended—the latter flushed and fidgety.

"Nor has the ring left the store," Dolph Daniels said, with demoniac triumph. "I saw your dutiful nephew, Thomas, step behind the counter, a moment ago, remove something from the show-case and give it to this Dutch devil—" then he bounded forward, and tore the ring box from Fritz's grasp.

"Stop! there is some mistake here. I placed my own ring, that Miss Rossie gave me, in that box, not over an hour ago, with a view of giving it to Fritz, for disposal. If my ring is not there now, they have been changed."

"Very likely! Here is the solitaire!" Daniels cried, holding up the solitaire triumphantly. "You are at last caught in the act, Tom Ward. I blush for you in shame."

And there was a thrilling tableau, right there and then. Rossie, who had just entered the store, leaned upon her guardian faint and horror-struck—Mr. Harrington stood gazing at poor Tom with sternly flashing eyes.

"My God, Tom! what tempted you to do this?" he moaned.

"Mr. Harrington, hear me swear that I did not steal that ring!" Tom cried, with a deathly shade upon his face. "There is

some infernal underhand work here. If you will but listen, I will explain all that I know. Last night I was dunned for a gambling debt which was contracted long ago, before I shut down on such folly. Dupree, my creditor, threatened to lay the matter before you unless I settled by ten o'clock to-day. Not desiring to trouble you, and desiring at the same time to honestly settle the debt, I concluded to pawn my ring until I could save up enough out of my salary to redeem it, and with the pawn money pay off my indebtedness. For the safety of the thing, I put the ring in an empty jewel-box, and then waited until Fritz came, to get him to do the errand for me. How the solitaire ring came in the place of my own ring I do not know."

"Clever argument—right clever!" sneered Daniels.

"Tom, my boy, I fear you are in a fix," Mr. Harrington said, sternly.

"No, he is not!" cried Rebecca, stepping forward and seizing Felice by the wrist of the left arm. "This Frenchwoman has Mr. Tom's ring in her hand here! *I saw her change the rings!*"

"*Mon Dieu!* ze game is up!" Felice cried, fiercely, wrenching her wrist from Rebecca's grasp, and hurling the ring to the floor.

"Young woman, what was your object in this foul attempt?" Mr. Harrington demanded, turning severely upon her.

The terrible eyes of the Frenchwoman gleamed maliciously.

"Ze object!" she hissed, drawing her figure back, and showing her pearly teeth in a tigerish smile—"ze object, you ask? I tell you ze object. Monsieur Tom Ward was my lovaire, and he is zis day refused to marry me--and I sought ze glorious revenge. As I have failed—I will go!"

And she did go, with a mocking laugh pealing from her lips.

Then Mr. Harrington gave Rossie over to Daniels, she having fainted, requesting him to remove her to the office, and turned to Tom.

"Thomas, you may consider yourself discharged from my employ, and from the company of my ward. You may also draw your salary, and go, Fritz; the same with Rebecca. I will see if I can hereafter have less trouble. Go, I say, every one of you!"

And, then, turning he strode away in a passion.

Nothing was left for the luckless trio, but to accept his mandate

"Vel, all mine air-gastles vas gone smashed to dunder. I've a mind to go

commit Susansider mid der Delaware Riffer!"

It was Fritz who made this remark, as he sat with Rebecca in her uncle's pawnshop, that evening.

"Oh, no, Fritz, you won't do anything of the kind. Why should you? If we have lost good positions, there is a wide world in which to find others, just as desirable and profitable!"

A month passed; Fritz and Rebecca were back in the employ of Mr. Harrington—the former as a traveling salesman, and the latter as cashier in poor Tom's place.

Mr. Harrington was in poor health, and Daniels was general business manager, under the merchant's dictation, and there was talk of his soon becoming half-partner in the business.

Mlle. Felice—of her only a very few knew anything definite, but there was a rumor that she was the owner of a fashionable down-town "club-house," or, in plainer phrase, high-toned gambling resort patronized by the aristocratic sporting element of the city.

Of Tom nothing favorable was said, for report had it that he had plunged headlong into dissipation and recklessness.

Report said, also, that he was a frequenter of Mlle. Felice's establishment, which but confirmed the declaration, on her part, that he was her lover.

These reports were not brought to Mr. Harrington by Daniels, even though he may have been interested in their forthcoming.

Daniels was the most unobtrusive and obedient of men, of late; he scarcely ever mentioned the circumstances of the past, and was ever on the alert to do anything which he believed would please the merchant.

Fritz was watchful, quiet, and reserved. He did not exchange confidences with any one except Rebecca.

In one cf these consultations the Jewish maiden said:

"Fritz, you are growing in shrewdness and business tact, every day; why can you not in some way work things better for poor Tom Ward; my heart aches for him! I met him this morning but he did not notice me, and he looked so wearied and broken-hearted, that I could have cried, if I hadn't been on the street, so I could."

"I'm afraid id don'd vas all worry dot affects Tom, Rebecca."

"Oh! Fritz, what else can it be?"

"Schnapps, Rebecca—wine, late at nights."

"Oh, dear! You don't think there is any truth in the report, do you—that Tom fre-

quents a gambling place down-town, of which Felice is the owner?"

"Vel, at first I didn't, but ash I haff seen him go in dot blace lately, I must believe mine eyes, you know."

"But, aha! Fritz—how should a nice moral young man like you know anything about such places—just explain that?"

"Oh, vel, Rebecca, you know dot we pizness shendlemen find oud dose t'ings py hearsay. I took pains der vind oud der location of Mademoiselle Felice's place, yoost to learn if Tom did go there."

"Well, then of course you are excusable, you dear, good fellow. But, Fritz, I am afraid you commercial travelers are sometimes very, *very* naughty."

"Oh! Rebecca, how can you say dot? Der drummer is der most innocent man on der road. And, by the way, Rebecca, ash I vas makin' purdy good wages now, vid brospect off a raise, v'ot you say apoud our getting married? I dink you vas yoost der nicest girl in der world, und I haff some conceit dot ash Mrs. Fritz Snyder, you vould do me great credit."

"Oh! Fritz, you flatter me."

"No, I don'd, Rebecca; I don't vant you to t'ink dot; I nefer flatter anyt'ing but der goods I represent, und vant to sell—und you know I vouldn't sell you, Rebecca, for all the goods in the city."

"Are you very sure you like me, Fritz—very, very, *very* sure?"

"Yes, I ish more as a t'ousand times sure, Rebecca."

"Well, Fritz, I do rather like you, and if you will always make me a good indulgent husband, have a hired girl, and dress me better than that big-feeling Rebecca Schriver, I will marry you, on conditions."

"V'ot conditions?"

"That, when you get Tom Ward out of trouble, reinstated with Mr. Harrington, and married to Rossie, you can fetch around a minister and take me as yours truly."

"Rebecca, I vil do dot, so help me shimminy!"

CHAPTER X.

AT THE CLUB HOUSE.

THAT same evening Mr. Harrington called Dolph Daniels into his private office, and bade him be seated.

"Dolph," he said, surveying his nephew, narrowly, "I am about to make some changes in my business, and I have concluded to discharge you from your present position and put Filkens in your place."

"As you like, sir. I can undoubtedly obtain a position, elsewhere?" the young man replied, flushing a little.

"But there will be no need of that, my boy. I have become so rich I have no longer need to strive for lucre, and so I propose to take you and give you a half-partnership in this business."

"Oh! uncle, such a generous gift I am afraid I have never deserved?"

"Well, perhaps not. I shall however fix the matter so that you can fall out as easy as you have fallen in, if you become undeserving. But one thing troubles me—that is, I cannot get Rossie's consent to a marriage with you. Of late she has clung more fondly to the remembrance of poor misguided Tom, and though I have kept her closely in the house, it does not seem to have the desired effect. She declares she will marry no one but Tom—unless it can be proven that he is faithless to her, in going to visit Felice."

"I can well understand, sir. I have done my best to obtain her consent to our union but have been unsuccessful."

"It is provoking and bothersome, too, for I have all along resolved to make her husband my partner, and shall do so, no matter who he may be."

"Can she not be convinced of Tom's infidelity, uncle?"

"Indeed, I do not know how, Daniels? She will not hear to any argument that I can advance."

"There is no argument so convincing as that of one's sight; therefore take her to Felice's place, at an hour when Tom is to be found there, and let her see for herself. One dose, I think, will be sufficient to effect a cure."

"Perhaps that would be a good plan. She can be disguised beyond recognition, and I will accompany her. When had we best go?"

"To-night, at eight. During the day, for the success of our venture, I will see Felice in person, and have her arrange it so that you will be admitted."

"Very well. Send in Fritz when you go out."

"No need off dot, for Fritz ish here," that worthy said, advancing from a position near the door, where he had overheard the conversation between the merchant and Daniel. "I come to say dot der ship Shrewsbury is in harbor, with a cargo of silks."

"Ah! how fortunate. Daniels, you may attend to the business."

"Very well, sir;" and he accordingly left the office.

"Fritz," Mr. Harrington said, turning to his *protege*, "you may be seated. I have something to say to you of importance."

"All righd, Misder Harrington; I'm open to hear anyding."

"Well, Fritz, I have an important errand

for some party to fulfill, and as you in your short engagement in my employ have shown an upright and honest disposition, I do not know of any one I'd rather trust than you."

"I vas very much oblige for der compliment, Misder Harrington, und you can bet a half-dollar Fritz Snyder vil alvays be honest und square."

"A good resolution, my boy. Now, this errand I speak of, while demanding no particular labor, requires the hand of a quiet and careful person. I have in my possession a casket containing five elegant diamonds which I imported for a New York lady at a cost of \$10,000. These jewels I now desire to have delivered to her, but do not wish to consign them to the care of Express or mail routes. Therefore, believing you perfectly honest, I want you to take them to New York, and deliver them to the owner. If you will do this as you ought, I will give you a 'lift' when you and Rebecca go to housekeeping."

"I'll do it, Misder Harrington. V'en shall I start?"

"At six to-night. Here is the order to the banker for them. Good luck go with you."

Fritz received the order, and soon after left the store.

"Ten thousand dollars' worth of diamonds!" he mused, as he walked along. "V'ot a change in der circumstances from two months ago! Dot time Mrs. Shrimp vouldn't haff trusted me mit a dozen of pins."

He went straight to Rebecca and made known to her his proposed trip.

"And, v'ot you t'ink, Rebecca?" he added, "Misder Harrington he vas goin' der take Miss Rossie to der establishment off Felice to-night, so dot she can see for herself dot Tom goes there."

"Oh! Fritz, this must not be! If she goes and finds Tom there, it will be the breaking of the last chance for him, in her favor."

"But, id can't pe helped, Rebecca; how you suppose I vas able to stop Mr. Harrington und Rossie from goin' dere?"

"Probably you cannot; but you could warn Tom of the trap that is being laid for him, so that he could avoid being caught."

"Humph! You don'd vas know Tom, Rebecca. He vas utterly reckless of late, und off he thought they wanted to catch him at Felice's, v'y, I'll bet a half-dollar he d go there on purpose, vor to giff dem an obbordunity."

"Oh! Fritz, it is too bad. I'd rather give a hundred dollars, if I had it, than to have Tom found there by Mr. Harrington and Rossie."

"Vel, Rebecca, I dink I know a way it

can be arranged. Felice is Daniel's wife, or, dot is, 'she dink she is, und is shealous of Daniel's attentions to Rossie. Now, if I go und see Felice und tell her dot Mr. Harrington und Rossie only wants to find Tom at the club-house in order to convince Rossie of his unworthiness, yoost so she vil marry Daniels—den you can bet a half-dollar she vil get madder ash a hornet, und out off spite see dot Tom don'd vas around when they come."

"But, Fritz, you could not go to this place unless I went with you—indeed you couldn't. You are a regular masher, anyhow, and I couldn't think of trusting you in the society of a fascinating woman like Felice."

"But, Rebecca, v'ot could you do at a club-house? You don'd vas know a red from a white, und besides, Mr. Harrington said I vas to start for New York at six, und how can l afford to disobey his orders?"

"Another train leaves later in the evening, and you can take that, and no one will know the difference. Fritz, you must go and prevent Tom from being seen—do you hear, you *must*—and I will go straight with you, to keep you company and protect you."

"Vell, Rebecca, I vil get de diamonds und get all ready, so dot I can make the train; den ve will go to der club-house to-night yoost ahead off Mr. Harrington and Rossie!"

Randolph Daniels was as cool and calculating a man in villainy as he was a shrewd man in business.

He always made it his aim to leave no stone unturned which would attain success, and he had a far-seeing faculty that aided him greatly.

That afternoon he dropped in on Felice at her fashionable down-town club-house.

She received him in an elegantly-furnished parlor, and he greeted her with a warm embrace.

"*Ma belle* Felice grows even prettier in the new home," he said, leading her to a seat upon a sofa. "It is an elegant establishment, Felice, and you must be proud of it."

"I have not ze pride; it is you who reap ze profit."

"But it will be yours and mine together, now, in a very few days, Felice. I have good news for you. Old Harrington has declared his intention of taking me in as a half-owner of the business in a few days at the furthest. But one thing is lacking. He wants one thing assured him—that Tom Ward is a frequenter of your place! As soon as he finds that out for sure, he will take me in as partner, and once those papers are signed, I will acknowledge you to the world as my wife."

" You swear you will do zis?"

" Swear it a dozen times, if you like."

" Den ze gladness come to me, Monsieur Dolph—ze joy of my life vil be complete. An' it iz ze easiest job to find ze Monsieur Tom here every evening."

" So I am aware. The fellow is going to the dogs as fast as he can. I have arranged to have Mr. Harrington and his ward call here to-night at eight, and I want you to have it arranged that they see Tom here. That will be sufficient. Mr. Harrington will see and become satisfied—I will become partner, and everything will work to the end I have so long been planning for."

" Zen I will have ze arrangements made. Will you come with ze Monsieur Harrington?"

" No, but I have another thing to tell you. It may be that the fellow, Fritz, will come here, to warn Tom. See that he does not. He may not come, as the old man has ordered him off to New York, with ten thousand dollars' worth of diamonds. If he does come here, it is likely he will have the diamonds in a jewel case, in some inside pocket. A word to the wise is sufficient, Felice; you are not slow to comprehend!"

The Frenchwoman's eyes sparkled, venomously.

" Ten t'ousan' dollare!" she exclaimed, rubbing her hands together, greedily—" zat is grand—ze magnificent sum. I see zat it nevare leave ze house, if ze Dutchman comes here. I can fix it—ze glass of drugged wine, or ze drugged segar will make ze Jew sleepy, an' zen my work is ze easiest."

" Ah! you are right. But be sure that the Governor sees Tom, now, and the more embarrassing his situation, on discovery, the better it will be for our purpose. Good-by, now, till we meet again, my darling."

And kissing her he took his departure.

" It will work, now," he muttered, with diabolical triumph, as he made his way back toward the store. " Felice will be the cause of sending my rival another notch toward ruin, she will steal the diamonds and get sent up—and I will marry the fair Rossie. Ha! ha!"

Felice was honored with calls that evening by those she expected.

First came Fritz and Rebecca, and they were shown to the grand parlor, where Felice received them, with a cordiality that was coldly returned.

" It gives me ze greatest pleasure to see my young friends from ze store," she said, " especially ze lovely Rebecca. Ze Jewish lady is so winning."

" Rebecca replied stiffly. " You should

make sure of having friends before you call them so, mademoiselle. Fritz, proceed with the business that brought you here, and let us leave this wicked place."

" Vel, Rebecca, dot ish v'ot I came vor. So I proceed. Ma'am'selle Felice, you dink you vas married to Mr. Randolph Daniels, don'd you?"

" I am aware zat you know ze secret," Felice replied. " Mr. Daniels said it."

" But, dot don'd was der question! Do you know dot der man you cound your husband, is about to marry another?"

" No! nevare!" Felice hissed, fiercely.

" But he vas, all der same. Dis very night Daniels vill send der merchant und Miss Rosalind to dis blace. Uff dey find Tom Ward here, as vas deir eggspectation, dey vil go pack, und Dolph Daniels vil marry der girl, und pecome partner."

" Nevare! nevare! I would drive ze poniard in his black heart, first."

" Dot would do no good, und like ash not you would get your neck proke, mit a rope around id. Der ish one vay you could prevent dot pizness; ven der guvernor und Miss Rossie vas come, you dells dem dot Tom Ward vas not here, nor has neffer pen here. Dot will settle it. Rossie vil refuse to marry Daniels, und you can haff an obbordunity to give him der duyfel at leisure. See?"

" Yes, I comprehend; ze plan is ze grand one, and I t'ink I will do it zis night. But, I must consider ze advisability. In ze mean while, yonder you find ze choice segar to smoke, while I consider ze advisability—ze advisability!"

" Vel, I don'd care if I do," Fritz said. " Dose French beoples alvays smoke good cigars," and he accordingly helped himself to a Reina from a stand upon a table near by, and lit it, while Felice paced to and fro across the carpet several times, her head partly bowed, as if in thought.

Suddenly the door opened, and a colored servant came in, bearing a card salver.

" Ah! ze merchant and ze mademoiselle have come!" Felice said, turning to Fritz, on glancing at the card. " Peter, you may say I will see zem directly."

The negro bowed and retired.

Then Felice turned again, this time to Rebecca.

" You must go and warn ze Monsieur Tom to leave ze house by ze private entrance at once," she said, excitedly. " I will not go, but will wait here. Fritz must not go, lest Monsieur Harrington see him. You will find ze Monsieur Tom in ze Room 12, engaged in playing ze faro. Go, quickly, or all will be lost!"

CHAPTER XI.

"I HAVE BEEN DRUGGED AND ROBBED."

"I WILL do as you say, mademoiselle," Rebecca said. "Fritz, you stay right where you are until I see that the road is clear; then I will come back for you."

"All right, Rebecca. I don'd feel much like runnin' avay, I'm so tired," Fritz replied, wearily. "I suppose der pizness I haff done to day haff caused me dis headache. You go see dot Mr. Harrington don'd see Tom, und dot vil pe yoost der ticket."

Rebecca went out of the room. Felice, who stood near the table gazing at her victim, moved a step nearer.

"Is the monsieur ill?" she asked, in her soft tones.

"Vel, I ain'd just v'ot you might call ill, but I vas mighty sleeby. You can bet a half dozen dollar on dot. I guess maybe it vas pecause der cigar is too strong."

"Throw it away, then, and let me go for ze something to drink," Felice said—"a glass of sherry or ze sparkling champagne."

"No! I don'd vas drink anydings, ma'am-selle. I vas a Good Templar. Oh! shimmey, how funny I vas feel!" and he staggered to his feet. "I dinks I vas done wrong to come here. If der Governor vas to catch me here, he vould giff me der duyful. I guess I shall haff to lay down. I vas so sleepy. Ven Rebecca comes tell her—ah!"

He did not lie down, but fell prostrate upon the floor, his senses gone.

Felice rubbed her jeweled hands together eagerly as she approached him.

"Ze drugged segar worked all capital!" she hissed. "Ze Jew have ze strength of ze horse or he would have succumbed long ago. He is senseless; there is no one to watch me. Now, I will get ze diamonds—ze ten t'ous-and dollaire diamonds. Grande! magnificence."

And, like a serpent she glided forward and knelt by his side.

"Ze grand!" she continued to murmur, as she searched Fritz's pockets—"ze magnificent diamonds—zey shall be mine, and I wear zem when I go back to *la belle France*. Ah, I have got zem!" and from the inner pocket of Fritz's vest, she drew a long leather portemonnaie and opened it.

Sure enough, there were the diamonds, in the silken pockets—five in number, and of exceeding brilliancy and size.

"Ah! beautiful! grand!" Felice hissed, gazing at them rapturously. "Zey are mine, too—mine—mine!"

"And you have got them at the price of your liberty!" a cool, sneering voice cried, and with a startled cry Felice turned to behold Dolph Daniels standing but a few paces off surveying her triumphantly.

"*Mon Dieu!* how you frightened me!" she gasped, trembling. "I was not expecting you."

"So it would seem. Ha! ha! I've caught you in the act, mademoiselle! Henceforth you are nothing to me, and if you dare to trouble me, I'll hand you over to the law!"

"What! what is zis you say? You would betray me, monsieur, an' I ze wife of you? Take care!"

"Bah! you're no wife of mine! The marriage was but a sham to satisfy your scruples, and that I might use you as my tool. Ha! ha! I shall marry Miss Rosalind, and if you ever dare even to whisper that I was anything to you, I'll send you to prison!"

An awful glare crept into the French-woman's eyes, while her features were as white as marble.

"You send me to ze prison?" she hissed, creeping nearer to him—"you would do zis t'ing, Dolph Daniels? Nevere! I see into your plan now, of which I have blindly become ze victim. Zare is ze diamonds!" and she hurled the case fiercely upon the carpeted floor, with a shuddering curse.

"I throw zem away! You shall not trifile with me. You shall promise zat you will marry me zis very day, or I will kill you—do you understand—I will *kill* you!"

"Ah! don't be a fool! Keep your stolen prize, and keep your mouth shut, and you will be let alone. I am going now. Remember, henceforth, you and I are strangers, woman!"

"Nevere! villain! monster! cheat! You shall find ze French girl is not like ze American girl, to be fooled zis way!" and with a terrible oath in her native language, Felice flew at him with the fury of an enraged tigress, a long stiletto in her grasp.

For a moment there was a fierce struggle between her and Daniels; then, with a faint gurgling cry, she staggered back, and fell upon the floor, the deadly instrument buried to the hilt in her own bosom.

"The deuce! I didn't mean to kill her, but was forced to!" Daniels hissed, deathly pale as he glared at her. "I must get out of here before I am discovered, or it will go hard with me. And, while going, there is one important item I must not forget!"

And with a cool laugh, he picked up the diamond case and put it in his pocket; then quickly left the room.

Not too soon either, for a couple of moments later a door opened, and Mr. Harrington and Rossie entered the parlor.

The sight that met their gaze caused them to leap back with startled exclamations.

"By Heaven! what does this mean? Fritz here!" the merchant gasped, in consterna-

tion. "There has been foul murder done. Help! help!"

His cries brought three answers—the negro servant, Tom Ward, and Rebecca, rushed into the room almost simultaneously.

"Oh! Fritz! Fritz!" Rebecca cried, kneeling over her lover. "What is the matter? What ails you?"

While Tom and the negro raised Felice to a silken couch near by, the latter hastily began to apply restoratives.

"Who has done this terrible work?" Tom cried. "Perhaps Fritz can tell."

"Fritz! Fritz!" Rebecca cried, shaking him soundly.

"Vel, Rebecca, v'ot ish der matter?—v'ot ails me—I feel strange!—I—I—Mr. Harrington, you here?" the drugged youth asked, arousing and gazing about him.

"Yes, I am here, sir, and least of all expected to find you and Rebecca in such a place. What explanation have you to offer, sir?"

"Vel, I can't eggsplain much—I vas half-asleep, I guess. I don'd know vot ish der matter mit me. I und Rebecca ve come here to get Felice to send Mr. Tom from der gambling-room, so you don'd vould find him here. Der Felice she giff me a cigar to smoke, und id make me sick, und sleeby. Rebecca vent to tell Tom—den I vent to sleep. I vas very sorry, Mr. Harrington, but I didn't vant you to find Tom here!"

"Oh! I see. Give me the checks of your sample trunks, sir, and the diamonds!" the merchant cried, angrily.

"All right; I don'd blame you vor discharging me; but I didn't vant Dolph Daniels to vin der villainous game. V'ere ish Felice?"

"She lies yonder, dead or dying. What do you know about the matter, sir?"

"Noddings. She vas all right, v'en I last remember. I told her dot Daniels vas not true to her, und vas goin' to make a bigamist of himself, by marryin' Miss Rossie, und I dink maype she gommited suicide. Here ish der checks, Mr. Harrington, und here vas— My God, der diamonds ish gone!"

"Gone!" the merchant gasped.

"Yes. I had dem in der inside pocket of my coat, v'en I come here, und now dey vasn't dere. I haff been drugged und robbed!"

With a groan Mr. Harrington turned to Rossie.

"Come, my child," he said; "let us leave this place, poorer but wiser by coming. You, sir,"—turning to Tom, haughtily,—"can draw upon your back salary, which is yet due you, to bury yonder woman!"

"Being under no obligations to her, sir, I have no desire to act in the matter!" Tom

replied, quite as haughtily. "My business here is to make a living, sir, which you had previously given me in exchange for services, until a foul schemer's craft divided us. If you came to spy upon me, you may have already learned this."

Then he turned and strode from the room, Rebecca, at the direction of Fritz, accompanying him.

Mr. Harrington and his adopted daughter also took their departure, and Fritz and the darky, Pete, were left alone with Felice, whose life-tide was fast ebbing out, as she lay motionless and marble-like upon the sofa.

She died late that evening, and just before she expired she signified a desire to speak.

Accordingly the two men bent closer to catch her words.

Felice had committed suicide because of a lover's unfaithfulness, said the newspapers; and as suicides are growing to be an everyday occurrence, this particular case was soon forgotten, after the Frenchwoman was laid away in a quiet nook in Fernwood.

Neither Fritz nor Rebecca went back to their positions at the store, as they were well aware that they would not be taken back, after what had occurred.

Fritz, however, met the merchant on the street one day, and saluted him respectfully.

"I am aware dot you vas very angry mit me, Mr. Harrington," he said, "but I vant to speak mit you in private, yoost a few minutes."

"I am always willing to listen, sir, but my time is limited, and you must be brief. Step into this restaurant, where there are seats."

They accordingly did so, and then Fritz said:

"Mr. Harrington, I vant to ask you von question: Is der no hope for poor Tom Ward? Have you utterly given opp having anyding more to do 'with him?"

"I am afraid I have, sir. He is unworthy of my confidence and esteem."

"No, he is not! I know better ash dot. Von hair of his head ish worth more ash a dozen like Mr. Dolph Daniels. V'ot has he done that is really criminal? I proved to you dot he vas not der robber."

"But his having to do with Felice, when as good as engaged to my ward—what denial have you for that?"

"Der most emphatic. Dot job in der store was all a put-up job between Felice and Daniels. Daniels wanted Rossie, und knew if he could make Tom oud false, id vould serve his purpose in procuring Tom's dismissal, und giving him a chance, both for Miss Rossie und der partnership."

"I am not ready to believe this, sir. You would intimate that Dolph has been plotting to secure Tom's ruin, in order that he might win."

"Dot's just v'ot I mean. More ash dot; Dolph Daniels ish der man who robbed your safe, disguised as a woman—Dolph Daniels is a member of der Smugglers' League—Dolph Daniels vas der husband of Felice, und Dolph Daniels vas der man who killed her!"

"Fritz, stop! I will not hear to such unjust charges! What has my nephew done to you, that you should thus wish to wrong him?"

"Nothing; nor do I wrong him, in declaring der truth. He haff done all dose t'ings, und, *I can prove it!*"

"Fritz! will you stop this nonsense?"

"No, I vill not! I say I can prove it, und it won't take long to do id, neither. And, now, v'en I can prove to you that Dolph Daniels vas der robber, und dot he murdered Felice, who run der establishment of which he vas der proprietor—prove it fairly and honestly—den vil you take Tom back? Vil you lift him up, ash vas in your power and reinstate him, und let Rossie marry him, und thereby make a man of him?"

"Before I answer that, sir, tell me why it is that you take such an interest in Tom's welfare? Are you paid for it?"

"Nixy! I vas workin' for two objects. Der virst of all is humanity. I know dot Tom haff been wronged, und I vant to help him oud of dis trouble dot vas unmanning him. Secondly, Rebecca, she likes him, und von't marry me undil Tom vas married to Rossie, und effery ding vas made straight."

"Well, sir, although I have not the least faith in the truthfulness of your charges against Dolph I will give you a chance. When you recover the diamonds, prove to me that Daniels it was who robbed the store, and killed Felice—then, and only then, I will reinstate Thomas, make him my partner, and Rossie shall be his bride!"

CHAPTER XII

FINIS.

"THAT will be der easiest t'ing to do, in der vorld, Mr. Harrington, und I haff you soon convinced dot Fritz is working for your good, ash vel ash dot off Mr. Tom."

"When I find it to be so, I will believe you, sir."

"Dot ish right. Believe vot you see; derefore, I vant you to go to der store to-night, und I vill show you who vas der robber, to start with; next, you shall hear der

evidence dot was given at Felice's death confession. It may take time to run in der diamonds, ash whoever has dem vil pe purdy quiet apoud lettin' der detectives know id. I t'ink I can prove also dot Dolph Daniels haff got them!"

"By Heaven! I see you're bound to make him out guilty. Where shall I meet you to-night?"

"At der same place dot we met at v'en ve played spy der odder time. You vant to come armed, for ve will see who ish der robber dish time."

"How do you know that? There have been no robberies of late to give you cause to suppose that there is any chance to capture the culprit."

"Maybe not, but I vil bet a half-dollar ve git der son-of-a-gun der-night. I've got it in my mind dot he gontemplates makin' a big haul, und closin' oop dis kind of pizness, ash he is apoud ter pecome the 'Co.' off Harrington und Co."

"Then you will persist in believing that Daniels is the robber?"

"I know dot id ish so, Mr. Harrington. All I vant is to convince you."

Soon after Friz and the merchant separated, the former wandering about town in hopes of meeting Tom, whom he had not seen since the night of the tragedy at the club-house.

In passing the St. Elmo Hotel, on Arch street, he saw Daniels standing on the steps, he having just come out from dinner.

"Hello! is that you, Fritz?" he saluted, cordially. "Come inside a moment. I want to speak to you."

Fritz obeyed, and they entered the waiting-room and became seated in a quiet part, where they were out of earshot.

Fritz was rather anxious to hear what the prospective partner of Mr. Harrington's business had to say.

"Fritz," Daniels began, when they were seated, "you are a pretty nice fellow!"

"Soft soap! cheese it!" the young detective replied, snapping his thumb and finger. "Off you haff anydings to say, Dolph Daniels, adjourn to business."

"Well, I have something of importance to say. When Felice died, she made a confession not exactly in my favor, eh?"

"Well?"

"She pronounced me her murderer, and made me out guilty of a good many unpleasant things, did she not?"

"I should rather t'ink dot way, off I vas to say anyt'ing apoud id."

"Well, I am not much surprised. I rather expected she would do so. She was terribly angered, and hers was a wicked disposition, and I expected she would strike me

a parting blow. Fritz, you are the only one knowing anything about it, and I want you to keep mum. You are a young man with bright prospects before you, and nothing to hinder you from making your mark in the world except the lack of a little money to start with. A thousand dollars would do you a great deal of good, and that sum shall be yours if you will swear never to raise any row, or disclose to my detriment anything you may have found out."

"Den you dinks I vas an unprincipled son-of-a-gun like yourself, do you? But I ain't. Dolph Daniels, take my word for it, it vas an unlucky day for you ven Fritz Snyder set foot in Philadelphia; und more ash dot, der is not money enough in circulation to purchase my good-vill und fixtures."

"Then I may consider that a declaration of war between us, eh?"

"I don'd know so mooch apoud dot, but you can bet a half-dollar dot I'll make it a hundred degrees in der shade for you purdy soon."

"Curse you—do your worst! I do not fear you; but remember, there will be a time of settlement between you and I!"

"All right! Don'd pe in no hurry. Pay up der poor washwoman befor you settle mit me. Good day, Daniels. Der's a steamer goin' der Europe von off dose days, purdy soon; better you go along."

Then with a provoking laugh the young Dutchman arose and left the discomfited villain to his own reflections.

"The cursed fellow is right. He has figured it fine, and if I don't make a home run of it, he'll ring in a deal on me that will be disastrously bad," Daniels growled to himself. "Before I go I'll fortify myself, however, against uncertainties of the future."

That day, for the first time since the club-house tragedy, Rossie and Tom Ward unexpectedly met.

The former was out for a horseback ride through the shady avenues of the incomparable Fairmount Park, and while galloping leisurely along through one of the aisles of the great stately grove, she beheld a man seated upon a bench a few steps from the avenue, under the shade—seated with his head bowed forward in his hands, as if in trouble.

So despondent and sorrowful was his whole appearance, that pure-hearted Rossie took a second glance at him, pityingly, and then gave a start as she recognized him.

It was Tom, and he was buried in evident unpleasant thought.

For a moment the merchant's ward hesitated, the expression of her fair face under-

going many changes; then she drew rein, slipped from her saddle, and went over and knelt upon the grass just in front of him.

"Tom," she said, softly, touching him—"Tom, what is the matter?"

He looked up, very much surprised.

"Miss Rossie—you?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Tom, I. Is there anything so strange, in that? What is the matter?"

"What else could be the matter than that I am the most wretchedly miserable fellow living?"

"Indeed! I am so sorry. What would it require to make you your happy self again, Tom?"

"What, Rossie?—God knows what, and yet keeps it from me. Your love and faith, Rossie, and a clear, unblemished name, would be all required. Do you see the blue river Schuylkill, yonder, Rossie? I was just about going down there and drowning myself, when you came."

"Poor Tom! But cheer up. The love I once gave you is still yours, Tom, and Rebecca assured me, to-day, that Fritz would soon be able to prove you guiltless of everything!"

"May God bless that noble-hearted boy, as I have often done!" Tom cried, tears of joy and gratitude standing in his eyes as he folded her to his breast.

Mr. Harrington and Fritz were in the store that night, behind their former barricade of bales, when the door opened and there entered the same person they had once before discovered as the robber.

Without offering any molestation, they allowed the seeming woman to enter the office and rob the safe, but when the bold robber emerged from the office he found himself confronted by the merchant and Fritz, each of whom had a pair of revolvers leveled upon him.

"Randolph Daniels, you are known at last, and your game is up," Mr. Harrington cried, sternly. "Raise your vail, or I'll shoot you dead, where you are!"

It is needless to say the vail was raised, and a frightful oath escaped Daniels, as he faced his captors.

"You see!" Fritz said, triumphantly, to Mr. Harrington.

"I see, and I no longer doubt you—need no further proof of your charges!" Mr. Harrington said, with a groan, and bowing his head in sorrow.

"Daniels, old veller, you didn't vas t'ink dot settlement would come so soon, did you? Now, den, der is yoost three t'ings I vant of you—den, by permission off Mr. Harrington, you will be allowed a chance to escape

vrom der country, before der officers get on your track. First of all, I vant der money you have got, v'ot you yoost hooked from der safe."

Daniels handed it over in a little leather pouch, with a growl.

"Take it, curse you!"

"T'ank you! Now, der next, please fork ofer dot five t'ousand dollars vich you drew to day, oud of Mr. Harrington's bank account, mit a forged check."

"It's a lie! I haven't a cent more."

"Take care! yoost hand ofer dot money, or I'll hand you ofer to der law!"

Daniels swore terribly, and drawing a package of bills from his pocket, gave them to Mr. Harrington.

"Better und better!" Fritz grinned.

"You vas so liberal like von philantrophist. Now, den, giff us der diamonds, und you can dake a go-ash-you-blease skip for liberty!"

"There's where you are mistaken. Vilain though I may be, according to this exposure, I have not the lost diamonds—I swear it, by all I hold sacred!" Daniels cried.

"Den, you know where they are?"

"No, I know nothing concerning them. Send me to jail if you like, but it will not avail you. Felice undoubtedly stole the diamonds, and put them where no one would find them."

"Daniels, you are a bad man—a villain—a murderer!" Mr. Harrington said. "I would be acting legally to hand you over to the law, but for relation's sake, and from a desire to have no further public disgrace put upon my family connections, I will give you one day to get outside the reach of the U. S. authorities. If found on American soil after to-morrow night, you shall suffer the full penalty of the law. Here is a thousand dollars—take it and go!"

Without a word Daniels threw off his disguise, took the proffered money, and left the scene of his late operations.

There is but little more to add in conclusion.

The following day, disguised as a laborer, he attempted to pawn the stolen diamonds to Rebecca's uncle, when they were promptly seized, at the instigation of Fritz, who was on hand watching, and Daniels was advised to leave.

Accordingly, he sailed that day in a steamship bound for Liverpool, and nothing more was ever heard from him.

Fritz, according to promise, proved who was Felice's murderer, by bringing forward the negro Pete, and causing him to relate the substance of Feiice's death confession, which had been to accuse Daniels of killing her, and also of the store robberies, and of being a member of the yet existing Smugglers' League.

It is needless to say that Mr. Harrington became fully satisfied, and made haste to take back Tom Ward into his full esteem and confidence, with due apologies for the past.

The very next day Tom became a partner, and it was not long after that he took to himself a life partner in pretty Rossie.

The Smugglers' League had not been broken up as yet, and Fritz declared his intention of ferreting out the whole matter.

"Und then," he said, "you can bet a half-dollar I marries Rebecca."

Out of a liberal reward given him for his services by Mr. Harrington, he sent the neat little sum of two hundred dollars to Miss Lotta Shrimp, for her good deed toward him, and then turned his attention to his proposed new venture, which was to prove the "little Dutchman" a genius in the wit, wisdom and wariness of the born detective.

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